Elderly Fil-Am probable SARS case in South Korea

Story below, Col. 2

Thai finance chief trapped in hi-tech car

AYOKO NA SA LINTEK NA HIGH-TECH!

BANGKOK—While on the way to an important speech, Thailand's finance minister got locked inside his luxury car on Monday because of an onboard computer malfunction. He had to signal someone to smash a win-

THAI/ A20

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Only US has power to stop terrorism–Lee

SINGAPORE—The United States is the only country with the power to stop terrorism and it is in Singapore's interest to align itself with Washington, Singapore's elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew said in remarks published Monday.

"Without the US, terrorism—whether al-Qaida, Jemaah Islamiyah or whatever groups all over the world—cannot be

ONLY/ A18

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Tuesday, May 13, 2003 ★★ 52 pages / 4 sections / vol. 18 / no. 154 P15 website: www.inq7.net

Gov't-MILF talks on edge

₱5.5-B rehab program in South starts in Siocon

DAVAO CITY—A P5.5-billion program for the rehabilitation of Muslim Mindanao will start in Siocon, the town in Zamboanga del Norte that Moro rebels attacked eight days ago, Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza said yesterday. The attack left 22 people dead.

Dureza said the program would target 5,000 barangays in Northern, Western, Central Mindanao and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The town of Damolog in Bukidnon is also included in the program.

Dureza said the Office of the President in Mindanao (Opamin) was given 12 months to move things under the latest framework of Mindanao Natin.

Dureza resigned last week as chief negotiator for the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front following the suspension of exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The suspension came after the MILF attack on Siocon.

He said he resigned so he could concentrate on development works in Mindanao.

Mindanao Natin has a 10-point pro-

P5.5-B REHAB/ A18

SHATTERED LIVES. Gloria Acosta, her two sons and daughter weep as they view for the first time the remains of her husband who was killed in the bomb explosion that rocked Koronadal City in South Cotabato on Saturday. AP

GMA: Time running out on rebels

By Carlito Pablo and Norman Bordadora

THE PRESIDENT yesterday set the stage for finally breaking off peace talks with the MILF, calling on the Moro separatist movement to "cut the double talk" and warning the rebels that "time is running out" on negotiations.

"There is an obvious link between the attack on isolated communities, on one hand, and urban bombings, on the other, both of which are terrorist acts," the President said in an official statement. "Time is running out for the MILF to prove its sincerity in the peace process."

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said "a decision on whether to declare the MILF a terrorist organization (was to) be discussed" by a Cabinet oversight committee on security late last night.

If Foreign Secretary Blas Ople's proposal before the Cabinet oversight committee on internal security is any gauge, however, the MILF will still have ample time to prove its sincerity.

Ople's proposed plan is to give the rebels 60 days to stop all terroristic acts. If they fail, government will then deem the peace process "sabotaged."

Ople said Presidential Adviser on Peace Process Eduardo Ermita supported the idea.

In her statement, President Macapagal said: "The MILF can no longer hide behind a veil of legitimacy under the growing suspicion that it is involved in the entire web of terrorism, domestically and regionally."

The President told the MILF to "cut the double talk and make a clear-cut statement on whether it is allied with the Abu Sayyaf and foreign terrorist groups such

GOV'T-MILF/ A18

Military: Don't blame us for failure of intelligence

By Martin Marfil *in Manila*
and Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DON'T blame us. Blame those who could have provided information but chose not to.

This, in a nutshell, was the military's argument yesterday for what it admitted was a failure in intelligence that led to the Koronadal bombing on Saturday. Officials said the military should not be blamed solely for this failure because citizens had failed to provide them with timely information.

The Koronadal blast killed nine and wounded 42 others.

"Indeed there may be a failure of intelligence since the bombing was not prevented. However, this could have been prevented if somebody out there who knew this bombing plan could have informed either our soldiers or the police that there is such a plan," Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, chief of the Armed Forces' public information office, said in a statement.

In Koronadal, three suspects were arrested in connection with the bombing.

"Intelligence is an important concern (which should not) be left alone to the AFP and the PNP to solve," Lucero said. "In a nation confronted with terrorism, every peace-loving citizen in this country is a stakeholder ... Failure of intelligence could then be seen partly as a failure of our citizens to give their helping hand to

MILITARY/ A18

Wife decries husband's 'humiliation' at Sandigan

By Volt Contreras

ANTI-SARS measures brought instant stigma to a local government bureaucrat from Bicol who was barred from entering an anti-graft court building in Quezon City yesterday after showing signs of fever.

Coming all the way with his wife from their home province, he was refused entry by security guards at the Sandiganbayan who were under instructions to bar any employee or guest with a "feverish" temperature of 38 degrees Celsius and above.

WIFE/ A19

Fil-Am placed in isolation ward in Seoul

By Armand N. Nocum

JUST when Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit was breathing a lot easier over the SARS crisis in the Philippines, South Korean health officials placed an elderly Filipino-American in an isolation ward after airport quarantine officers diagnosed him as a "probable" SARS patient.

The 80-year-old ethnic Filipino, who stayed in the Philippines for two weeks, showed classic symptoms of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome on Sunday upon arriving at Inchon Airport for a stopover on his way to San Francisco, the National Institute of Health (NIH) said.

The case baffled Dayrit, who said he would immediately initiate contact tracing of the US citizen during his stay in the country. "This is strange because we have no known community spread of SARS," Dayrit said.

Should the man turn out to have SARS, Dayrit said this would automatically put the Philippines on the list of areas with unknown SARS carriers, along with Beijing, Guangdong and Shanxi in China, and Taipei in Taiwan.

The World Health Organization has advised travelers to avoid these places where the risk of infection is high.

NIH official Ryu Byung-hee, however, said more tests were needed to determine whether the Filipino-American, who is in intensive care, indeed had SARS.

Ryu said the man had a fever of 39.4 degrees Celsius, difficulty breathing and showed signs of pneumonia.

As a precautionary measure, the NIH isolated 11 crew members of Asiana Flight 372 on which the man had traveled from the Philippines, as well as five passengers who sat near him. Of the 243 passengers on the plane, 132 traveled on to San Francisco at 1030 GMT Sunday.

It was the second probable case of

FIL-AM/ A19

BULL'S EYE. A guard, wearing a protective mask, checks the temperature of a man before allowing him to enter an office building in Shanghai with a thermal device that looks like a gun. AFP

PDI JOB FAIR. More than 5,000 people trooped to the Glorietta in Makati Monday for the job fair hosted by the INQUIRER Job Market and attended by some 100 companies. INQUIRER President Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, right in left photo, opened the job fair with PDI executives Pepito Olarte, VP Advertising; Donald Lim, AVP Marketing and Classified Ads, and Rene Reinoso, SVP Sales and Marketing.

No rush to judgment on Cha-cha at Senate

By Christine O. Avendaño

CONTRARY to the claims of House leaders, the Senate committee on constitutional amendments will hold two more hearings before voting on resolutions seeking to amend the Constitution, Senate President Franklin Drilon said yesterday.

Samar Rep. Eduardo Nachura, chair of the counterpart committee in the House of Representatives, earlier claimed that the Senate committee would vote yesterday in favor of a constituent assembly as the mode for amending the Constitution.

Drilon said the holding of two more hearings indicated that the Senate committee had not obtained the eight votes needed from the 14-member panel to pass the resolution calling for a constituent assembly.

"It's an indication that the bravado of the Speaker (Jose de Venecia) is contrary to realistic assessment," Drilon said. "They don't have the numbers yet."

NO RUSH/ A20

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/13/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Chavit foe presses probe of ambush

By TJ Burgonio

"WE presume that our enemy here is Malacañang."

In this frame of mind, Efren Rafanan and at least 100 supporters trooped to Camp Crame yesterday to demand that top police officials make sure the probe of his recent ambush in Vigan would move faster.

An ally-turned-critic of former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson's, Rafanan and his daughter Renely survived the March 31 attack in which his wife Evelyn, son Raffy Brian, brother Dennis and aide Angel Ocampo were killed.

Rafanan is asking the Philippine National Police to suspend the privilege of the governor's office to choose the provincial police director, so as not to compromise the probe.

Singson's protégé and former vice governor, Deogracias Savellano, is the present Ilocos Sur governor. He defeated Rafanan in the last local elections.

The Rafanans were on their way to radio station dzXE in Vigan when armed men blocked their vehicle and fired at them.

Rafanan, a former provincial board member who now hosts a local radio show, promptly tagged Singson in the ambush, after he had openly criticized the former governor in his show.

"I wish Malacañang would not interfere in favor of Chavit," Rafanan said, insinuating that Singson's perceived closeness to President Macapagal-Arroyo was hampering the six-week-old investigation.

In a press statement issued yesterday, Singson said he was being blamed for Rafanan's defeat at the polls. Although his former ally now considered him an enemy, Singson said, "I am all for an impartial investigation of the case . . . if only to get to the bottom of things and clear my name."

He warned that his "more influential enemies" could take advantage of the situation, harm the Rafanans "and blame me for it."

Surely, Singson said, his detractors were behind this "concerted action" against him. "They (have) tried to kill me . . . the same way they disposed of Salvador "Bubby" Dacer," he said.

At Camp Crame yesterday, Rafanan and his supporters went straight to the office of PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. But because Ebdane was with the President in South Cotabato, Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay, deputy chief for administration, met with the group.

Nestor Segismundo, chair of the March Thirty-One Movement and former president of the anti-Chavit Save Ilocos Sur Association (Sisa), said the governor's power to choose the provincial police director "should be taken away from the hands of Chavit Singson."

Singson had less-than-kind words for Segismundo, too: "His own father had him sent to the Bantay, Ilocos Sur municipal jail last December for drunken behavior." Also, the ex-governor said, Sisa was just "riding on the Rafanan case."

He hoped the situation would not trigger more violence, Singson said. "It is very clear (they) are trying to provoke me, but I assure everyone that I will not be provoked."

Rafanan earlier demanded the relief of provincial director Senior Supt. Mario Subagan for alleged failure to invite Singson in for questioning.

Aglipay explained in yesterday's meeting that Subagan could not be dismissed without due process. But he promised to take up Rafanan's two requests with the National Police Commission, which had the authority to decide on them. *With Christine O. Avendaño*

Military can't meet deadline

THE MILITARY yesterday admitted it will not be able to meet the 90-day limit given by President Macapagal-Arroyo nearly three months ago for it to completely eliminate the Abu Sayyaf. The deadline falls on May 30.

"Completely eliminating the Abu Sayyaf cannot be done within the time frame but we would achieve the objective of degrading the capabilities of the Abu Sayyaf, which is in compliance with the presidential instruction," said military spokesperson Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia.

Garcia said the Southern Command was doing its best against the Abu Sayyaf, but completely eliminating them within 90 days was "another matter."

The Abu Sayyaf continues to engage the military in sporadic gun battles and is believed to have joined up with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in some raids. The group still holds two hostages, both women members of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The MILF has admitted launching the recent attacks against the military and civilians in southern Mindanao that have claimed over 80 lives. *Martin P. Marfil*

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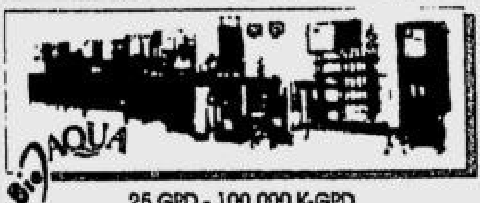
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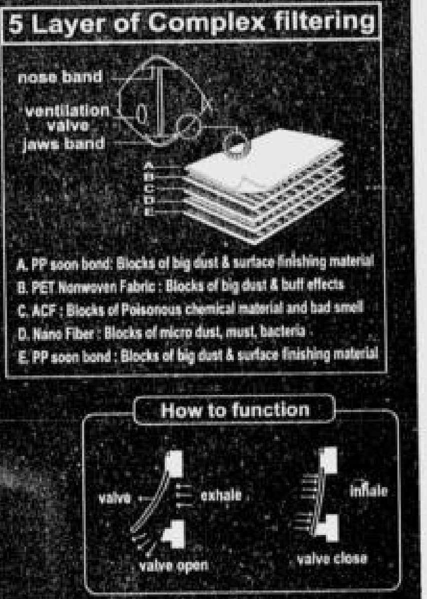

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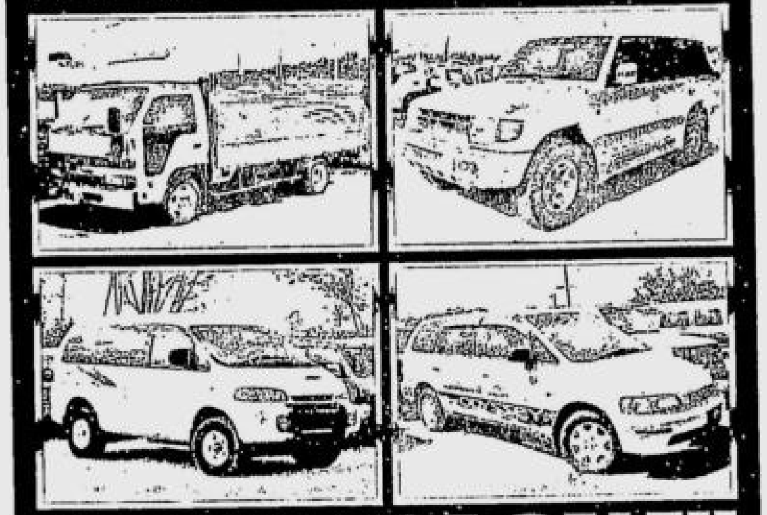
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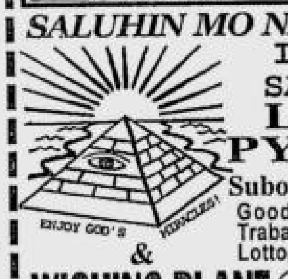
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FEVER MANAGEMENT IN THE TIME OF PNEUMONIA

What Is Pneumonia?

Pneumonia is a disease that occurs when the lungs get inflamed, usually due to infection. It's a more common problem than most people think. Usually it's a mild disease, but some forms are very dangerous and require a consultation with a doctor. An example is the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS, whose cause and cure have yet to be discovered. About 30 different kinds of germs infect the lungs and cause pneumonia. Infected lungs leak fluids and shed dead cells. This material clogs up air sacs and makes it hard for the lungs to do their job of getting oxygen into the blood. Without enough oxygen, none of the cells in your body work as they should.

Pneumonia can affect just one section of the lung or many sections of the lung. When both lungs are affected, it's called double pneumonia. Pneumonia generally lasts about two weeks. But it may take a month or more for the infected lung or lungs to clear up. Thus, when recovering from pneumonia, even healthy people may feel tired or weak.

> *"Fever as a symptom of pneumonia should always be managed at the onset"*

Causes

Viruses cause about half of all cases of pneumonia. Bacteria are the most common cause of pneumonia in adults over the age of 30. Fungi can also cause pneumonia. Many of these germs are all around us. They usually can't get past a healthy person's natural defenses. That's why pneumonia is most common in elderly people, in cigarette smokers, in alcoholics, and in people suffering from other diseases such as the flu.

Symptoms

- Viral pneumonia usually comes with a combination of low fever and chills, muscle aches, fatigue, enlarged lymph nodes in the neck, chest pain, sore throat, and coughing. The cough generally brings up only a small amount of mucus.
- Bacterial pneumonia usually comes with a combination of high fever, cough with thick greenish or rust-colored mucus, shortness of breath, rapid breathing, sharp chest pain that is worse with deep breaths, abdominal pain, and severe fatigue. There can be profuse sweating and mental confusion.
- In children, labored and rapid breathing (more than 45 breaths a minute); sudden onset of fever; cough; wheezing; and bluish skin, lips, or fingertips are general signs of pneumonia.
- Mycoplasma pneumonia is often very benign and resolves without any treatment. Symptoms can consist of violent attacks of coughing that bring up only a small amount of mucus. There are chills and fever; some people get nausea or vomiting. Some patients become very weak for up to a month.

Fever as a symptom and why it should be managed at the onset

Fever is a common symptom among the kinds of pneumonia. That's because fever is, by itself, the body's warning signal that there is an infection. It is very important that fever not be ignored so that a disease, whether pneumonia or not, can be detected and further complications be avoided. In the case of pneumonia, the best thing to do is to manage your fever at the first sign.

Managing Fever at the Onset

Whether it's mild or high, you should take Paracetamol like Biogesic to help alleviate your suffering from fever. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid physical and mental stress. It is also advisable to dress in light clothing so that you feel comfortable and your temperature can stabilize. After managing your fever, this does not mean that the rest of the symptoms should be taken lightly.

When to consult a doctor

- Your symptoms indicate you have any form of pneumonia. In many instances, you need immediate treatment to recover and avoid complications.
- Your sharp chest pain does not get better with prescribed treatment; you have increased shortness of breath; or your fingernails, toenails, or skin becomes dark or develop a bluish tinge after diagnosis. Your lungs are not getting enough oxygen and you need medical assistance.
- You cough up blood; you may need additional treatment for a worsening infection.

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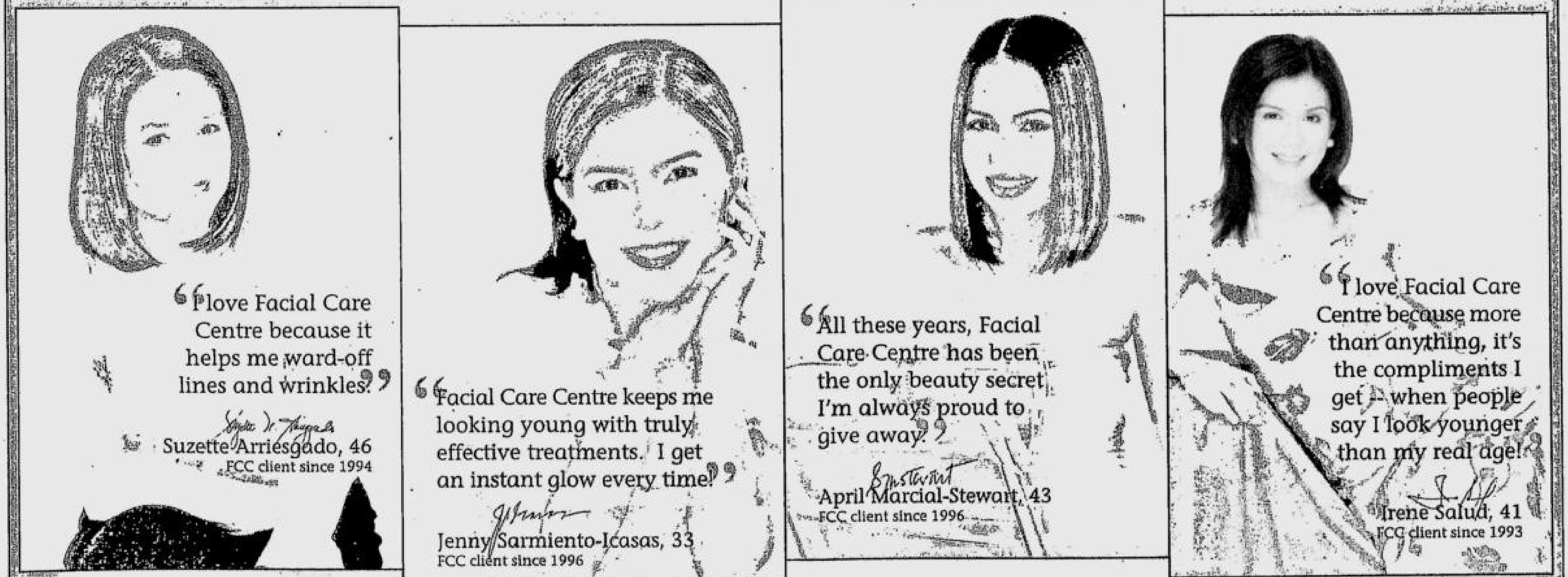
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Lawyers' group seeks quick action on Meralco refund

AN ORGANIZATION of lawyers yesterday asked the Supreme Court to compel the Energy Regulatory Commission to implement immediately its order for the Manila Electric Co. to refund almost 10 years' worth of overcharges to its customers and to stop the firm from continuing to collect the illegitimate rates.

The Lawyers Against Monopoly and Poverty also asked the high court to cite Meralco with contempt for "forum shopping" in its bid to seek a more favorable ruling than the recent SC decision ordering the power distributor to refund about P30 billion in overcharges.

"Meralco clearly failed and refused to obey the high court . . . Even till the present, it continues to collect the overcharged rates from consumers ruled out by the court. It is indeed an open, deliberate and persistent defiance and disobedience of the Supreme Court decision," said the Lamp petition.

The group was represented by lawyers Ceferino Padua and Anatalia Buenaventura. It said it sent its petition to the SC through registered mail as it had no courier service to make a personal delivery.

The group said that because of Meralco's "failure and refusal" to obey the SC ruling of Nov. 12, 2002—which was decided with finality on April 9—the amount of its indebtedness has soared to P30 billion.

"Except for Meralco-fed news reports, there is no apparent intention to settle this gargantuan debt. At the rate Meralco has procrastinated in making good its huge obligation, there may come a time when it can no longer cope with the problem," the petition said.

As for Meralco's alleged forum shopping, Lamp said the company had filed a motion before the ERC on March 20 asking to be allowed to charge income tax costs while the same issue was pending before the Supreme Court.

"Instead of awaiting the outcome of its motion for reconsideration with the high court, it resorted to seeking the same relief before a lower forum," the group said. *Norman Bordadora*

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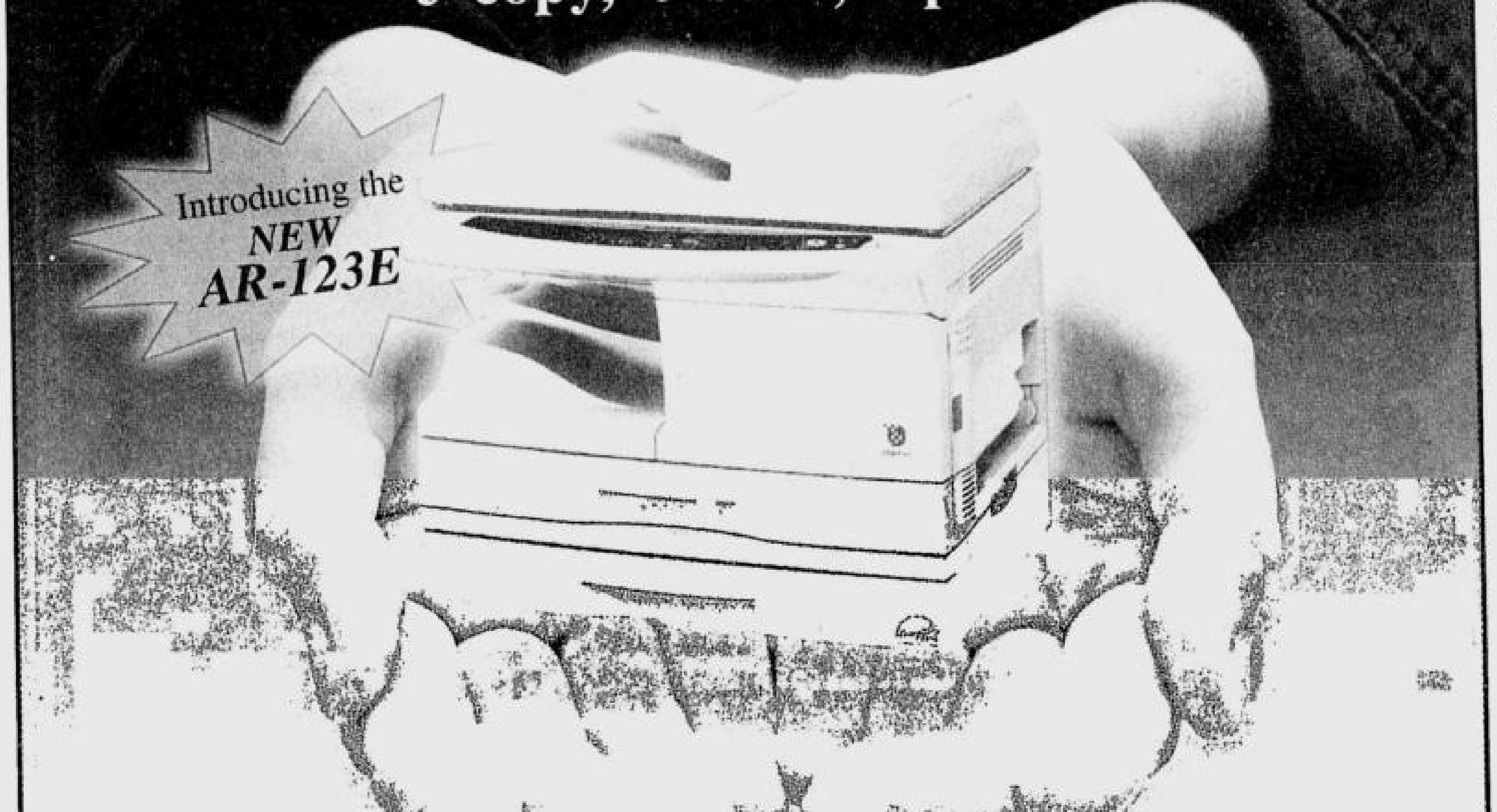

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Baja is new envoy to United Nations

By Norman Bordadora

BAJA PDI PHOTO

FOREIGN Affairs Undersecretary Lauro Baja left for New York over the weekend to formally assume the post of the Philippines' permanent representative to the United Nations.

Baja will oversee the country's bid for one of the non-permanent seats on the Security Council in 2004.

Baja said he was confident the Philippines will clinch one of the ten rotating slots in the SC when voting for the seats begins next year.

"I'm optimistic we will get it," he said Sunday.

The Philippines, the only nominee-country from Asia for the 10 seats, has received the support of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations bloc at the UN.

Baja said the country would need two-thirds vote of the UN membership to assume the Security Council seat it occupied for the first time in 1976 when Gen. Carlos P. Romulo was Foreign Affairs secretary.

Baja had served as a special assistant to Romulo at the time.

The Philippines hopes to take over one of the seats to be vacated by non-permanent members Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain, whose two-year terms expire on December 31.

The Security Council has 15 members, five of which are permanent—the United States, Russia, China, France and Germany.

The 10 non-permanent members serve terms of two years each and are replaced by other UN members-countries.

"We are the only country from Asia [this time] and we were endorsed by no less than the Asian bloc in the UN," Baja said.

Baja was recently presented by President Macapagal-Arroyo with the Order of Sikatuna with the rank of Datu, the highest award for Filipino diplomats.

The next term for the holder of a non-permanent Security Council seat will be from Jan. 1, 2004 to Dec. 31, 2005.

Under the UN Charter, all members of the body agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council.

While other organs of the UN may make recommendations to governments, the Security Council alone has the power to make decisions that member-states are obligated to carry out.

8 Filipinos, other peace monitors flee Aceh trouble

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—More than 50 international peace monitors, including eight Filipinos, withdrew Monday from Indonesia's Aceh province where a cease-fire in the separatist war there is close to collapse.

The group—composed of 43 Thais and one Norwegian, aside from the eight Filipinos—flew out of Banda Aceh airport here aboard a C-130 military aircraft, witnesses said.

David Gorman of the Henry Dunant Centre (HDC), an international mediation group, said the monitors would remain in Medan in neighboring North Sumatra or in Jakarta for the time being.

More troops, with rifles at the ready, were seen patrolling Banda Aceh, the provincial capital, on Monday the last day of a government deadline for the Free Aceh Movement to announce it was shelving its demand for independence and would start disarming.

Fresh troops have been pouring into the province in Sumatra island in recent days in expectation of a military offensive.

Gorman said a last-ditch attempt by HDC to arrange talks between the two sides was continuing. He said the government has not responded to a plan presented by the HDC for a meeting between the two sides. *AFP*

Flags to fly at half-staff for Mabini centenary

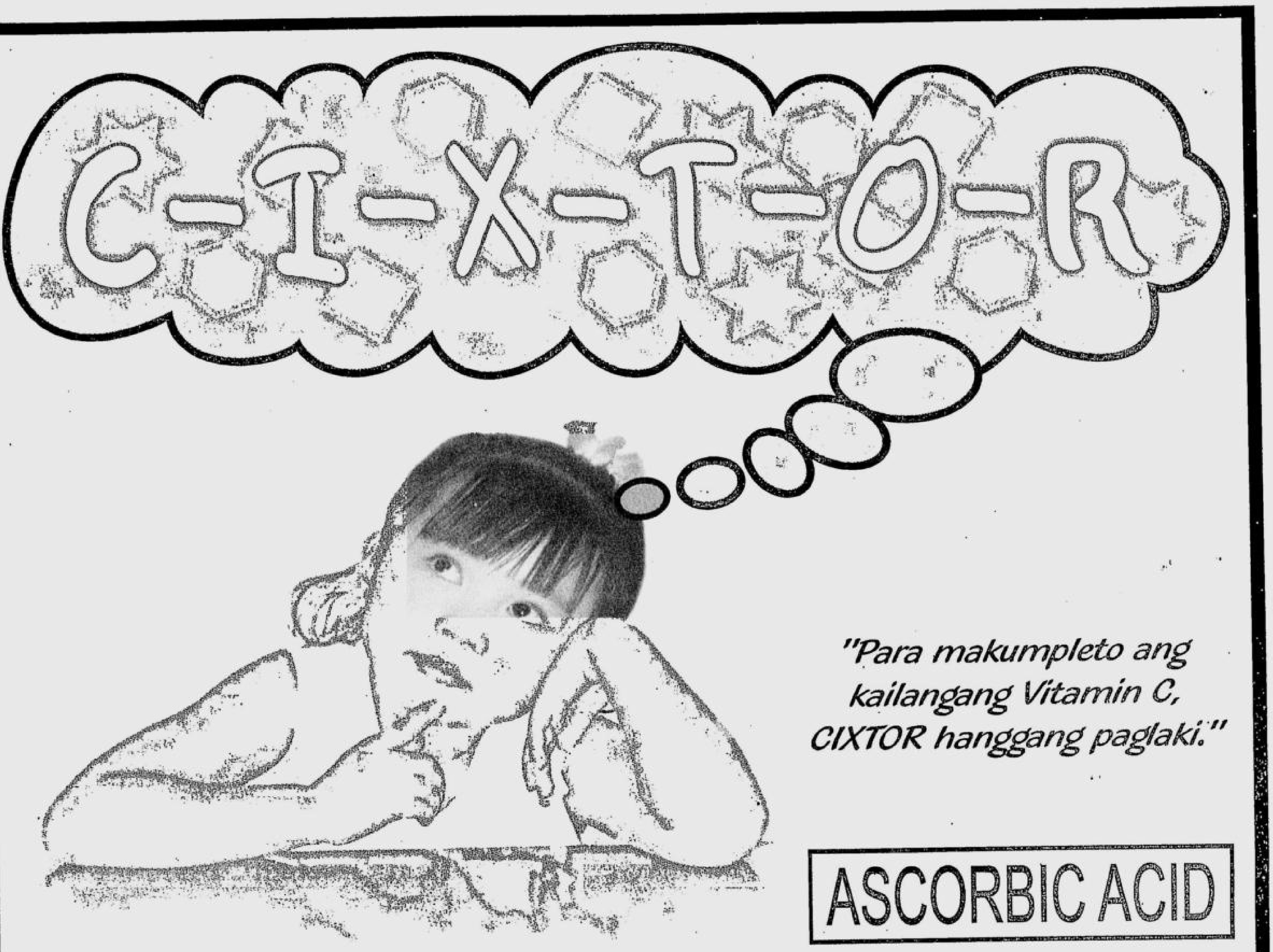
ALL GOVERNMENT buildings and installations will fly the flag at half-mast today to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Apolinario Mabini, the "brains" of the Philippine revolution who was also known as the Sublime Paralytic.

In Proclamation No. 377, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared May 13, 2003 a day of national remembrance of Mabini's death in 1903.

President Macapagal said the National Historical Institute has included the centenaries of the deaths of Filipino heroes among historical events of national significance.

To commemorate such events, the Philippine flag "should be flown at all buildings and sites at half-mast as a sign of remembering," the President said.

Mabini was confined to a wheelchair because of paralysis but this did not deter him from leading the revolt against Spanish rule in 1898. *Carlito Pablo*



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House panel OKs anti-SARS bill

By Juliet L. Javellana and Gil Cabacungan

THE HOUSE committee on health has approved a consolidated bill laying out the policies and providing funds for the fight against Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

The bill provides for the mandatory quarantine of people affected by the killer pneumonia.

It also sets aside an annual budget of P50 million to add to the P1 billion standby fund provided by Malacañang.

The bill was a consolidation of House Bills 5937 and 5974 authored by Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada Jr. and Iloilo City Rep. Augusto Syjuco.

Lozada insisted on mandatory quarantine, saying voluntary quarantine was not enough to guard against transmission of the deadly virus.

SARS isolation centers will be set up in provinces and regional centers to control the spread of the virus.

The bill also provides for the establishment of an inter-agency council to implement a comprehensive program to curb SARS.

Pharmaceutical companies, meanwhile, have reportedly cranked up their production of Vitamin C tablets to meet the spurt in demand for health supplements from a public convinced they would help in combating SARS.

The president of United Laboratories Phil., Carlos Ejercito, said the company has had to make new requests for fresh supplies of ascorbic acid, the main ingredient for Vitamin C tablets, because its inventory had run out.

With still no vaccine being discovered against the killer pneumonia, health authorities have encouraged the public to maintain good health and defend themselves against SARS by such means as taking Vitamin C supplements to boost the body's immune system.

Ejercito said demand for Vitamin C may well increase sharply in the next few weeks as businesses would be expected to allocate more funds to help their employees buy Vitamin C supplements.

The spurt in Vitamin C consumption, however, is not like to translate into a boom in profits for pharmaceutical companies.

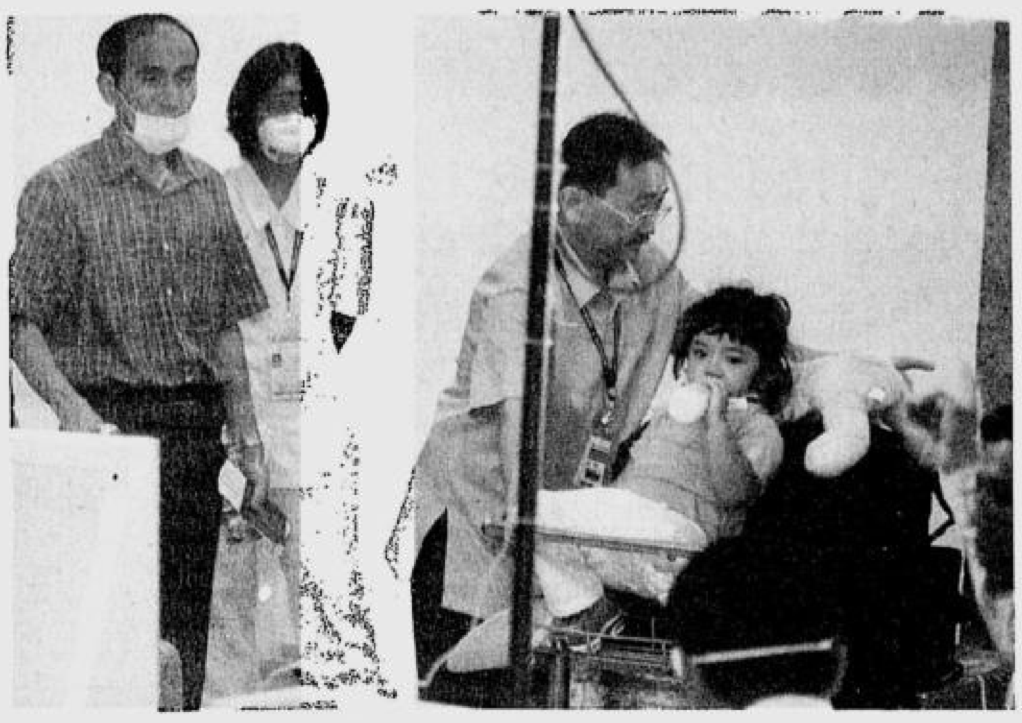
Ejercito claimed that the price of ascorbic acid has shot up from $4.50 a kilo to $12.50 over the past two months largely because of the rise in demand from SARS-struck countries.

He said the decision of international pharmaceutical giants Roche and BASF to cut back on Vitamin C production last year has also contributed to the skyrocketing prices of the supplement. But he said there were reports the companies would resume production soon to ease the shortage.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas has reported that domestic pharmaceutical firms have committed to maintain current prices (Vitamin C sells for an average of P1 per tablet) despite the escalation in raw material costs.

Roxas said the government was studying how the government can help the drug firms minimize the cost of raw materials, such as by cutting the tariff on ascorbic acid.

Ejercito said a tariff cut would be a help but its impact would be minimal as duties on ascorbic acid were already quite low.



A TODDLER undergoes a "Raytek" check at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport after the Manila International Airport Authority installed a fever-sensing machine at the departure area. ROGER MARGALLO

SARS cuts Taiwan-Laoag run further

LAOAG CITY—Another international airline route to this city has been suspended, bringing to three the number of flight routes that have been canceled because of the continuing threat from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

Laoag International Airlines, the ground handler for Far Eastern Airlines, has announced that the Kaoshiung-Laoag-Kaoshiung route from Taiwan has been suspended indefinitely from last Sunday because of "very low passenger load."

FEA ferries travelers from Taiwan to this city five times a week.

"This is very saddening for the local tourism industry. But hopefully, we can regain these flights (after the SARS scare has subsided)," said Eduardo Robles, manager of the Air Transportation Office here.

The suspension of the Taiwan flights followed the voluntary move by China Southern Airlines to suspend flights from Guangdong on May 7.

The CSA canceled its scheduled flights on May 14, 21 and 28 but said it would continue to ferry guests from Guangdong to Laoag on Fridays and Sundays.

Meanwhile, the suspension of thrice-weekly flights from Hong Kong has been extended to the whole of May.

"I understand the passengers (from Guangdong) are on special accommodation. These travelers are well scrutinized. They are required to undergo a 10-day quarantine before boarding planes out of their country," Robles said.

Passenger arrivals from Taiwan, Hong Kong and China have declined since the killer flu started spreading from Guangdong early this year.

Before flights were suspended, the traffic volume from Hong Kong dropped from 1,446 in February to only 617 last month.

The passenger load for Guangdong also dropped from 1,010 to only 313 for the same period.

Similarly, the Taiwan-Laoag route that previously enjoyed a passenger volume of 1,560 in February dropped to only 505 in April. *Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

GMA assures Piatco gov't will be fair, transparent

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday pledged to be fair in resolving the issues surrounding the controversial Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 project.

"The government is ready to handle all attendant problems in this case, (in accordance with) effective guidelines of transparency, fairness and full protection of the public interest," the President said in a terse, one-sentence official statement.

In his regular media briefing yesterday, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said a Cabinet committee would be meeting on May 15 to make recommendations to the President on the issue.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza will head the committee whose members include Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino Cruz, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II and Justice Undersecretary Manuel Teehankee.

Bunye earlier urged the Philippine International Air Terminals Co., whose contracts to build and operate Naia Terminal 3 were nullified by the Supreme Court, to desist from further litigation and resolve the dispute through negotiations.

Piatco has accepted the offer to negotiate out of court.

"Ideally, the earlier we talk out of court, the better for all of us," Bunye said. "Enough opportunities and time have already been wasted."

Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao said on Sunday that Malacañang's immediate priority was to have the airport open soon.

Tiglao said Mendoza was trying to convince Piatco to allow state airport authorities access to the terminal so they could see about completing whatever work was needed to get Terminal 3 operating soon.

'No legal basis'

In an interview yesterday, Piatco's vice president for public affairs said the government had "no legal basis" to gain access to Terminal 3 as the SC decision was not yet final and executory.

Moises Tolentino Jr. said using force to get into the terminal would be "tantamount to confiscation, a prelude to martial law."

He said the company had yet to be informed formally of the government's plans for the terminal.

Tolentino said the talks about the government's intention to carry out "remedial work" inside the terminal were made "over coffee" and not in an official meeting.

Before the government could take over, Piatco must first be compensated for its investment in the terminal, he said.

He said compensation should start at $550 million, the amount that Piatco claims it sunk into the project.

But the figure can still be negotiated, he added.

Tolentino stressed, however, that the compensation should not come from future revenues of the Naia 3's operations.

But Piatco might also opt for joint operation of the terminal with the government instead of seeking compensation, he said.

"If this is not legally possible, we'd have to be paid just compensation and this should be available when we ask for a settlement," said Tolentino while also claiming that Piatco was willing to talk. *Carlito Pablo and Abigail L. Ho*

Shooting mars Isabela polls

SANTIAGO, Isabela—Violence marred yesterday's special election—described as "generally peaceful" by a Commission on Elections official—to choose the representative for Isabela's 4th congressional district.

Police reports said a close-in security escort of Santiago City Mayor Jose Miranda was shot and wounded by two motorcycle-riding men while monitoring the conduct of the elections in Barangay Rizal here.

Chief Insp. Juancho Alobba, Santiago City police officer in charge, identified the victim as Danilo de la Cruz, 45, alias Boyet.

Miranda is the lone mayor supporting the candidacy of Dr. Asuncion Abaya (Lakas) to succeed her late husband, Rep. Antonio Abaya.

Lawyer Giorgidi Aggabao, the Nationalist People's Coalition district chair, is the other contender for the post.

Unofficial partial results at 5 p.m. yesterday showed Abaya leading Aggabao, 1,067 to 675 votes.

Based on Comelec records, the district—comprising the towns of Dinapigue, Cordon, Ramon, San Isidro, San Agustin, Jones, Echague and Santiago City—has 162,249 registered voters.

Police said De la Cruz, who was hit on the left buttock and right hand, was out of danger and recuperating at the Callang General Hospital here.

Alobba said the suspects had yet to be identified.

Comelec Commissioner Ralph Lantion described the incident, the first recorded election-related violence in the special polls, as an "isolated case." *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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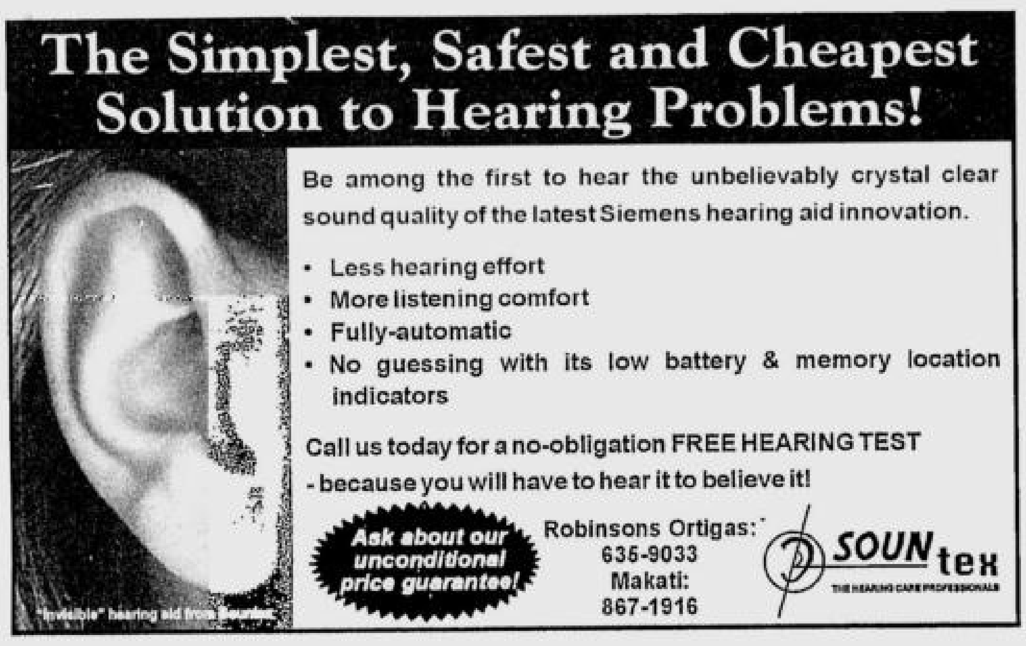
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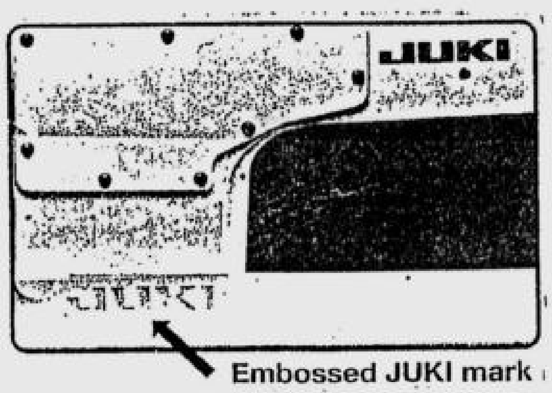

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Tesda seeks hold on Japayukis' visas

By Blanche Rivera

JAPAN-BOUND entertainers, or Japayukis, who obtained their artist record books (ARBs) during the term of resigned Technical Education and Skills Development Authority chief Dante Liban may have to delay their departures a bit.

Tesda has asked the Japanese Embassy to suspend the issuance of working visas to holders of 2,100 ARBs that the Tesda inventory team considers questionable.

The team, led by directors Clifford Paragua and Pilar de Leon, said the embassy should not take action on the visa application of those holding these "watch-listed ARBs" until they obtained a certification from Tesda.

The team said 986 ARBs within the number series "23,401 to 60,100" were still unaccounted for.

A total of 77 ARBs were spoiled while 37 had been assigned to two different talents each. These have also been classified as dubious.

Tesda also included in the watch list all ARBs in the 54,000 number series, some of which talents reportedly had bought for P45,000 to P50,000 each or bore the signature of Liban. Some of the ARBs in this series are also unaccounted for.

The Tesda board of directors ordered an inventory of ARBs following controversies regarding their issuance during in Liban's watch at the agency. Liban resigned in March.

In its report dated April 8, the inventory team said four different applications of Liban's signature were discovered upon examination of the ARBs.

There was a "real script" signature found in series 23,000 to 26,000, a large facsimile rubber stamp in the 37,000 series, a small facsimile rubber stamp in series 29,000 to 32,000, 39,000 and 53,000 to 60,000, and a "possibly forged signature" in the 54,000 series.

"There are no validating initials or signatures on the ARBs that bear the facsimile signature of Liban," the report said.

It was also noted that "no records or documents were found authorizing a specific person or persons to affix the facsimile signature of Liban on the ARBs."

The team said the Tesda board will be able to determine the validity of ARBs that bear only the facsimile signatures.

Liban's former chief of staff, Gen. Nestor Castillo, was reportedly in charge of releasing the ARBs in the 23,401 to 60,100 series.

'What's with youth?'

THE FILIPINO youth will be the focus of the 5th National Social Science Congress on May 15-17 at the Philippine Social Science Center on Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City.

With the theme "What's with the Filipino Youth: Social Perspective from the Social Sciences," the congress will take up more than 70 research papers covering topics ranging from self-concept and identity formation to youth programs and services.

The results of the Unesco National Commission of the Philippines Study on Filipino Youth in Transition will be presented at one of the panel sessions.

The study sought to learn what the Filipino youth aspire to, what they value most in life, who and what their major influences are, how they perceive themselves to be and what they feel about themselves.

A P2,000 registration fee will cover conference materials, meals and access to all the sessions.

More information may be obtained by calling the Philippine Social Sciences Council at tel. 929-2671 and 922-9630, or by e-mail at programs@pssc.org.ph.

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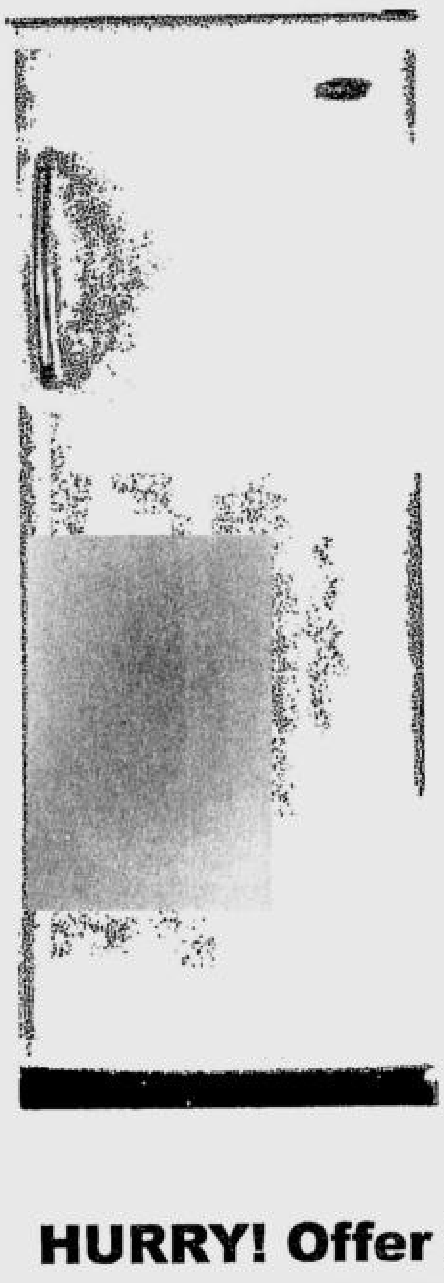

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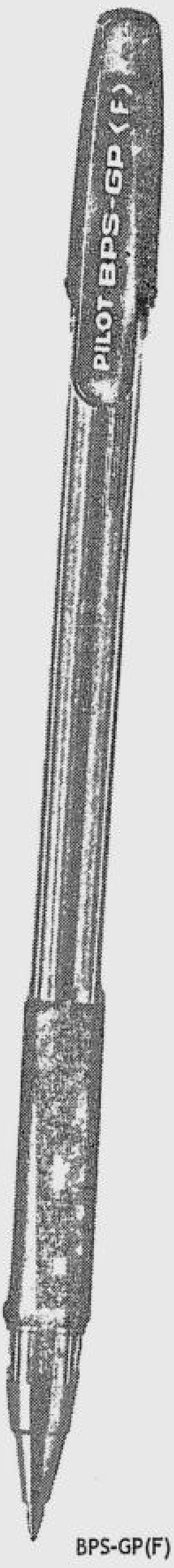

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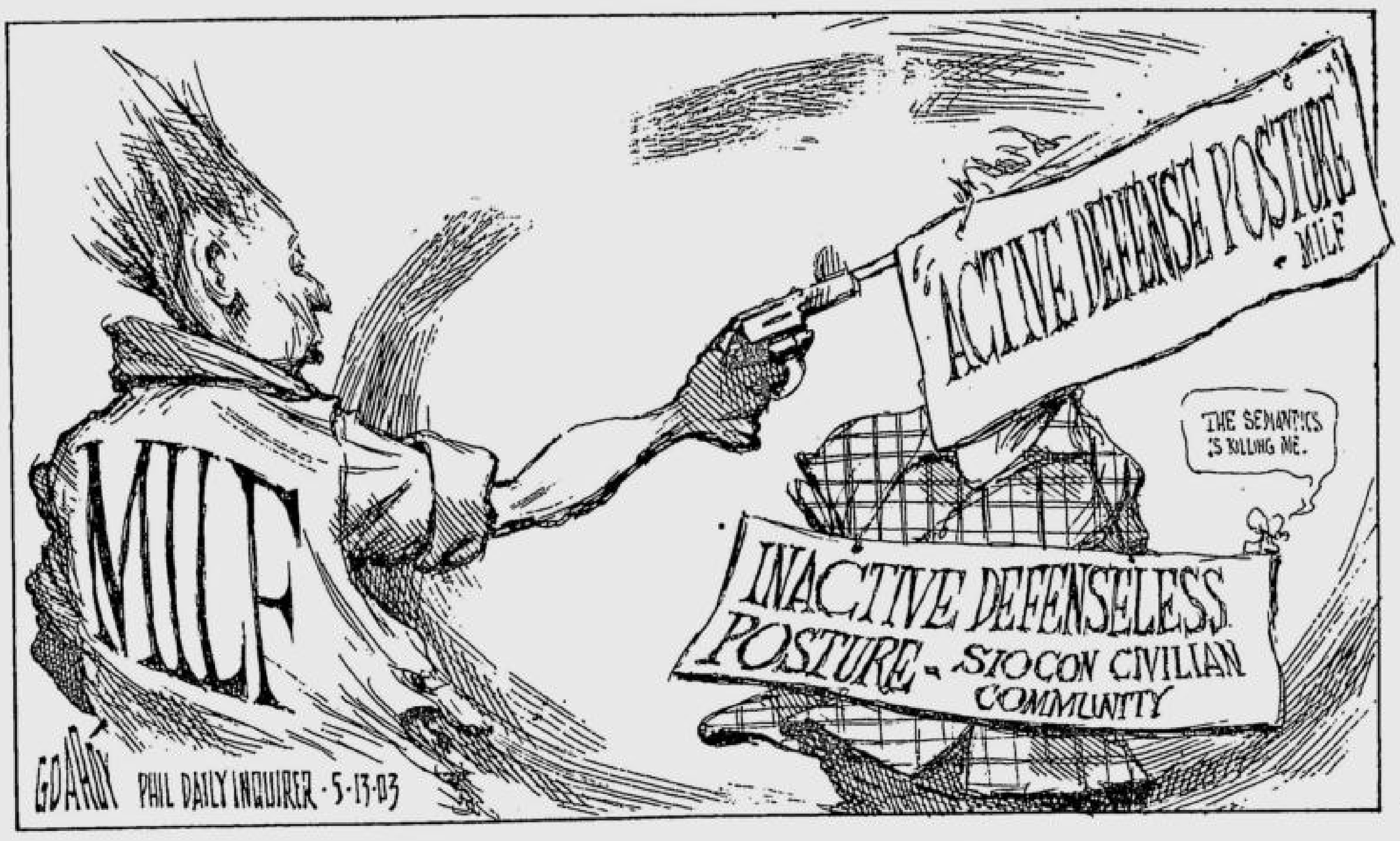
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Where is Wapile?

EDITORIAL

IT'S exactly one year today since Edgar Damalerio, a journalist of Pagadian City in Mindanao, was killed, but his suspected killer is still at large and has not been brought to justice.

The suspect, PO1 Guillermo Wapile, was ordered arrested by the Pagadian City Regional Trial Court on Jan. 30, 2003. Wapile was supposed to be restricted to Camp Abelon in Pagadian City under the supervision of the Philippine National Police. But PNP Provincial Director Pedrito Reyes said Wapile was no longer in the camp when an "inventory" of camp personnel was conducted on Jan. 28.

Where is Wapile now? Has he escaped the clutches of the law? Or has he been killed by the mastermind of the Damalerio killing?

Damalerio is one of the 39 Filipino journalists killed in the line of duty since democracy was restored in 1986. He was an award-winning journalist known for his stinging exposés of corruption in government. He was a radio commentator of dxKP-Pagadian, managing editor of the Zamboanga Scribe and host of "Enkwentro," a top-rating cable TV program.

Damalerio was driving his yellow jeep when he was slain. He had two companions in the jeep, Edgar Amoro and Edgar Ongue. Three days after the killing, Amoro executed a sworn statement at the NBI district office in Pagadian City identifying Wapile as the gunman.

On May 28, 2002, some people tried to divert the investigation away from Wapile by saying that a supposed witness, Rudy Garcia, pointed to Ronnie Kilme as the suspect. PNP Region 9 Director Felixberto Candado said that Garcia was actually a close friend of Wapile's.

On Aug. 10, 2002, a potential witness against Wapile, Juri Ladica, also known as Juvy Lobitana, was killed while riding on a tricycle in Pagadian City.

After a long process, Judge Franklyn Villegas last Jan. 30 issued a warrant of arrest against Wapile. A copy was forwarded to the NBI which then conveyed it to Reyes, the provincial police director. Reyes informed the judge that he received a copy of the warrant only on Jan. 31 but that since Jan. 28 Wapile could not be found. Reyes has been relieved as provincial director and has been charged by Gemma Damalerio, widow of the slain journalist, with infidelity in the custody of a prisoner.

Only last Tuesday, PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane, ordered Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla, police director for Western Mindanao, to get Damalerio's killer. But up to yesterday, Wapile had not been found and had not been arrested.

Why was Damalerio killed? The theory in media circles is that he angered powerful police officers because of his exposés. A report from Davao City on Aug. 17, 2002 quoted Reporters sans Frontieres (Reporters without Borders) as urging Interior Secretary Joey Lina to order the arrest of Supt. Asuri Hawani, Pagadian City Police chief. Carlos Conde of the New York Times News Service reported last Sunday that before his death, Damalerio had been accusing Hawani of corruption.

Meanwhile, the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists Inc., composed of several media organizations, has sent letters of protest and concern to government agencies urging Wapile's arrest but has not received any assurance that a determined effort is being made to this end. Wapile is still scot-free. Or probably he himself has been killed?

One potential witness has already been slain. Two other principal witnesses are in danger of being killed. Damalerio's widow is being threatened by certain people. Exactly one year after Damalerio was killed, his family is still crying for justice.

The slaying of 39 (or 41, according to another count) journalists in the line of duty the past 16 years and the failure of the government to bring their killers to justice sends a chilling message to journalists all over the country: they can criticize government officials and politicians or expose their wrongdoings only at the risk of their lives. Meanwhile, powerful people can continue to assassinate with impunity journalists who expose corruption and other irregularities.

A start has to be made in arresting, prosecuting and jailing the killers of Filipino journalists. Until such time that journalists can be assured of protection from vindictive news subjects and of justice when something violent has been done to them, we cannot call the Philippine press truly free.

Is wayward chemical plant still operating?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

OTHER countries are doing to us what we should have been doing to them a long time ago. Singapore, Taiwan, Kuwait, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Libya have issued travel bans against Filipino workers.

Singapore and Taiwan, along with China, Hong Kong and Toronto, Canada, are among the worst hit by SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). We got our first case of SARS from Hong Kong and our first fatality and transmission of the virus from Toronto. We should have imposed a ban on travelers from these countries to prevent SARS from getting here to protect our citizens.

But the special presidential anti-SARS committee headed by Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit was namby-pamby and refused to do so, even if it was the safe thing to do. People suspect the decision was influenced by Tourism Secretary Dick Gordon who was greedy for tourist dollars and did not want a lessening of tourist arrivals. Other members probably did not want to offend the countries whose citizens would be temporarily banned as a safety measure. So what we did was quarantine our own people, issue press releases, cross our fingers and pray while travelers from SARS-infected countries continued to come in. The INQUIRER's front page a few days ago showed long lines at the airport of arrivals from Hong Kong, which has the second highest number of SARS cases in the world, any one of whom could be carrying the SARS virus.

One carrier, Adela Catalon, brought in the SARS virus from Toronto, which killed her and her father, and caused panic in her barangay in Pangasinan, which was quarantined. So now we have 10 confirmed SARS cases, and other countries, including those who had SARS ahead of us, are banning our people and telling their people not to come here.

The Department of Foreign Affairs is protesting, but we can't really blame these countries. They are only trying to protect their people, the same way we should be protecting our own people but are not.

Why do we want new travelers from Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Taiwan and Toronto to continue coming here even if they pose a risk to our own people? Because we want their money. But if SARS spreads here, as it is spreading in these countries, all the tourist dollars we get won't be enough to stop it. All that money does not justify even one death.

Now that they are banning our people, why don't we repay them in kind? Why are we hesitating? Are we still afraid to offend them? They did it to us first, what's wrong with doing it to them? Their citizens will admire them for it because it is for their own good. Our own citizens will admire our government if it also bans potential SARS carriers from coming in and infecting us. Does our government love the tourist dollars more than its own citizens?

As for Gordon, he need not be afraid that a decline in tourist arrivals will reflect on him. There is SARS as a good excuse. But if Filipinos start getting sick because of laxity toward possible SARS carriers, Gordon will be blamed for it. He may not even be the real guilty party. It could be Dayrit or Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho or all of them together. So speak up.

* * *

Before the Holy Week, a storage tank of a resin factory, RI Chemicals Inc., in Pasig, burst, and some of the chemicals spilled. The toxic fumes sent 300 residents of the densely populated Barangay Bagong Ilog to the hospital. One of them died.

Pasig Mayor Soledad Eusebio ordered the closure and later relocation of the factory which was found to be operating without a mayor's permit and without safety and anti-pollution devices, as mandated by the Clean Air Act.

Despite the closure order, however, there were reports that RI Chemical is still operating. The chemical plant produces resins, glue, plywood, formaldehyde, aluminum sulfate and sulfuric acid. A big question is why a chemical factory was allowed to be located in a residential area.

Another question is the disposal of the factory's toxic wastes. The factory, however, assured the government that it will observe proper waste disposal and secure permits from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Pasig City Hall before disposing of any chemical waste.

* * *

Malacañang is being treated like an *uto-uto* by the United States by issuing a press release that a "rare" state dinner will be tendered by President George W. Bush at the White House for visiting President Macapagal-Arroyo on May 19. Like a true *uto-uto*, Malacañang is delighted.

"It is a big honor for the President and the country," gushed Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye. Malacañang said the same "rare" honors had also been extended to the leaders of Mexico and Poland.

What's so honorable with being lumped together with Mexico and Poland? They probably have the same *uto-uto* leaders and, like the Philippines, are poor countries with a dog-like hunger for a pat on the head from the great white father in Washington D.C. State dinners are routine in the White House which receives, and entertains (translation: *inu-uto*) so many foreign visitors. It just means eating with the visitors in formal evening clothes and saying flattering but meaningless platitudes during the toasts. The only thing "rare" during the dinner with President Macapagal-Arroyo could be the steak.

Changes

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

NESTOR Torre had a very interesting write-up in Saturday Special about film sleaze. This has become a problem of late, he says, sleaze invading TV as well in the form of sexy dancers, noontime show bikini contests, and "for adults only" sitcoms. "Some 60 percent of the Filipino film industry's current output is sex-based, sex-obsessed and sex-crazed, and some of the country's esteemed filmmakers have had to 'go sexy' to keep their careers afloat."

I've said my piece about the noontime shows in the past. Truly this is one area that needs to be regulated closely because it is open to the public. I've seen some pretty nasty things there. I have no beef with women wearing bikinis on stage or whatever minimum amount of cloth passes for attire. I have a beef with hosts ogling, leering and commenting freely on the physical attributes of the women. I once suggested that for Randy Santiago to appreciate what he and his confreres were doing to their guests, he should take off his sunglasses and allow everyone to comment freely on his eyes. That is how vulnerable those girls are in that state. Never does the phrase "sex object" take a more, well, naked aspect than in those shows.

My own beef with the plethora of sex in local movies has little to do with the sex or its plethora. I am not one of those who believe sex in movies naturally abets rape. Most men who see pictures of a woman in the throes of self-induced ecstasy—a movie ad presumably depicting that was a recent source of controversy—merely relieve themselves *mano a mano*. They do not scour the streets looking for victims. As for abetting rape, I would think the behavior of the hosts in noontime TV shows does it more surely. As the women's groups will tell you, rape is not about sex, it is about power.

My beef with the plethora of sex in local movies is its mindlessness. The only thing that's probably worse than mindless violence is mindless sex. Mindless sex is not sexy at all, it is tiresome. And it is numbing and dumbing. All it does is contribute to the numbing and dumbing of the Filipino. Of course, one can always argue that that is a little too late, the Filipino has already been numbed and dumbed beyond repair. And far less by reel life than by real life, the mindless spectacles offered variously by the people populating Malacañang, the two Houses of Congress, and the courts contributing more mightily to it than the *pito-pito* movies. But that is another story.

Lately, I've seen a spate of Spanish movies, and like most European movies, they do not suffer from Hollywood's libertinism and Puritanism, often both at the same time. They take their sex seriously, and therefore happily. The movies—"Talk to Me," "Juana Loca" (also called "Mad Love"), "Y Tu Mama Tambien," and "Sex and Lucia"—all have fairly graphic sex scenes. The last particularly, which some reviewers have described as one of the most erotic movies ever made. You may quarrel with their artistic merits, but you may not quarrel with the fact that they leave you provoked in more ways than one. But of course really sexy movies whet the sense organs, too (pun fully intended).

As in other things, the irony here is that while other Asian countries are making a splash internationally with critically acclaimed films—in particular China, Taiwan, India, Iran, and even Thailand (watch in particular "Tears of the Black Tiger," a visually stunning, surreal, mix of Western, gangster movie and Thai melodrama; it landed in Newsweek a year or so again)—we're regressing to more benighted times.

The solution is **not** another campaign against sex in movies, which we mounted last year—it has a way of waylaying good and bad movies alike. "Live Show" was its first victim then. It misses the point altogether anyway. I myself can think of several measures we can take to make things better.

Chief of them is to invest more in writers and less in stars. As other countries are showing, the secret to success lies not in better-looking stars but in better-sounding scripts. You don't have good scripts, you won't attract good actors to begin with. You'll just attract those who wouldn't mind losing their, well, clothes are the least of their burdens. There are limits to how far even Filipino audiences, whose brand—or star—loyalty is legendary, will patronize formula movies. There are exceptions—many of the entries in the Metro Manila Film Festival over the last three years easily qualify as so—but most local movies look like they were shot without any scripts. Truly, clothes are the least they do without.

Yet another thing we can do is to diversify imports and lessen Hollywood fare. We do get a small stream of European and Asian movies, but they are confined to specialized movie houses in Makati that charge prices that demand a suspension of disbelief. The point is to make them more accessible to the public. The idea is not just to "raise consciousness," as the activists of old liked to say, it is to broaden the public taste. So long as the Filipino taste for movies is dictated by Hollywood, producers will never go past the "import-substitution" phase of moviemaking—that is, making movies that dish out Hollywood with "a Filipino flavor."

And finally, well, I've said this before, but I don't mind saying it again and again: We want better movies, we have to patronize them. Aggressively. We do not watch movies like "Mga Munting Tinig," "Magnifico" and "Dekada '70," among the more recent ones, we have no business complaining that the local film industry is falling into sleaze. Bad movies flourish simply because we do not patronize good ones.

What do they say about evil? It flourishes because the good stand idly by and watch it happen.

Driver asks Romulo about job in Iraq

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE MASSIVE reconstruction of post-war Iraq, estimated to cost in five years' time some $100 billion, has the eyes of the world understandably riveted, as every country seeks a piece of the pie. Presidential Adviser for Global Competitiveness Roberto Romulo was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo chair of the Philippine Public-Private Sector Partnership for the Reconstruction and Development of Iraq, precisely to see how this country can cash in on job opportunities there.

* * *

Before he flew to Kuwait, to confer with key Kuwaiti officials as well as Kuwaiti-based representatives of the 14 giant US contractors who have bagged the big reconstruction contracts in Iraq, Romulo met with the media. He had earlier flown to Washington to meet with key officials of those US giants and is planning a trip to the United Kingdom to meet with its giant companies, too. In turn Filipino companies are gearing up to compete for subcontracts from the US giants. The Romulo task force's job is to serve as a link between them.

In a light moment during the briefing, Romulo said one clear indication of the interest of Filipinos in getting jobs in Iraq is that his driver asked him how to land one there!

* * *

Last weekend his seven-member team returned from Kuwait which, as he put it, is becoming "the main jump-off point for doing business in Iraq." The team met with key officers of the Kuwaiti business chamber and officials of two of its largest conglomerates. He said they expressed eagerness to do business in partnership with Philippine companies, with the Kuwaitis providing the capital and market knowledge, and the Filipinos the skilled labor and project management for which they have made a name in the Middle East. The Kuwaitis stressed that the reconstruction of Iraq should be viewed as a long-term endeavor that could take 20 years to finish. The task began with an initial allocation from the US Congress of $2.4 billion, but finishing the task will have to involve Iraqi oil which, at the end of the first Gulf War, was estimated to earn between $18 and $23 billion a year.

* * *

Romulo pointed out that the 14 giant US firms that have bagged contracts initially valued at $1.7 billion will be able to supply only 30 percent of the job requirements, so that 70 percent would be sourced elsewhere, with priority given to the 60 countries in the "Coalition of the Willing." Filipinos should get a sizable number, but Romulo noted that other countries have been lobbying in Washington and Kuwait with offers of their own workers, among them Poland, Turkey and Romania.

It is also significant that the US-appointed military administrator in Iraq, retired Gen. Jay Garner, has been supplanted by a civilian administrator in retired US diplomat Jerry Bremer. This is an indication that the US wants to step up not just the reconstruction but the restoration of a civil administration. As Romulo told the members of Congress, time is of the essence in mobilizing RP skills for Iraq.

* * *

This means taking stock of what we have to offer to Iraq. Looking at the initial job contracts, I note the diversity of needs: from various infrastructure projects to transshipment operations, warehousing, customs clearance and trucking of bottled water, to restoring public health services and upgrading schools, printing textbooks and training teachers. It's a wide-open field. But the Pinoy companies are ready and willing, and in fact some 170 companies applied by e-mail right after the task force was announced. Romulo was also impressed that the DOLE-POEA has a database of one million workers with passports, all classified by skills and ready to go.

What I am elated about is that the Iraq project will widen the base of RP involvement in the Middle East, as the other countries there are forced to upgrade their standards once Iraq is reconstructed. Moreover, the technology Filipinos will pick up in Iraq will automatically upgrade Filipino skills, away from the dehumanizing DH type.

* * *

What makes the autobiography of former Leyte Gov. Leopoldo Petilla, "Passing Through Life," heartwarming is that it's the story of a self-made man, son of two public school teachers/principals, who believes in the good, old-fashioned values of fear of God, honesty, close family ties, adherence to democracy and caring for the poor and underprivileged. So many times in his career as a lawyer, Petilla, though without money, opted to defend the poor and downtrodden against the elite. But Petilla also walked with the high and mighty, even though he didn't seem to have been spoiled by it, and this is a tribute to the values inculcated by his parents and the support of his wife, Leyte Gov. Matin Petilla.

Polding's book revealed his special affection for Ninoy Aquino, and his healthy respect and esteem for the late Sen. Gerry Roxas as well as former Senate President Jovito Salonga whom he describes as "one of the most brilliant Filipinos I ever met." Most touching were his vignettes about politics, such as how his small band of Liberals in Leyte tried to keep the flame of democracy alive against the onslaught of money politics epitomized by Imelda Marcos and Kokoy Romualdez, during the dark days of martial rule, thanks to the prodding, support and encouragement of the LP bigwigs mentioned above. Petilla's book is, as Dr. Victor Sugbo put it, a book of interest to "every Leyteño, local historian and researcher of local politics."

FAQ's on vasectomy

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AFTER THEIR fourth child was born, Marita Rosaot's husband left their hometown of Alabel in Saranggani, telling her he was traveling to General Santos City to buy bamboo. "But when he got home, he brought no bamboo with him," recalls Marita of that day almost 30 years ago. "I got worried, asking myself if something bad happened to him. When I asked him what happened, he said he had gotten a vasectomy."

Her husband's decision has since served Marita well in her work as a barangay health worker. When she preaches the "gospel" of reproductive health and family planning, she says, she almost always refers to their own experience. And her husband's vasectomy, she adds, makes her particularly effective in convincing other couples to consider the same procedure once they decide they've reached their optimal family size.

Marita and her husband are often consulted by other couples on vasectomy. She addresses the men's fears about pain by telling them that her husband recovered in no time at all. "I point out that he even had the old-fashioned kind of vasectomy, but with non-scalpel vasectomy, the procedure is much simpler, quicker and almost painless." As for unfounded fears of diminished manhood, Marita smiles and says "our relationship even got better after he had a vasectomy!"

* * *

WHEN we got to the house where three doctors were performing NSV's, the TV crew asked if they could shoot an actual procedure. After getting permission from doctors and patients, we were told we could observe if we wanted. But there are limits to the lengths to which I would go to satisfy my curiosity, and I chose instead to wait outside.

Later, Dr. Ismael Naypa, a municipal health officer from Bukidnon who believes so much in NSV that he volunteers to conduct training procedures around the country, gave me an idea of how NSV is performed. First, he took out what he called the "two basic, simple tools" used in the procedure. The first is a clamp with a small ring at the end that is used to grasp the vas through the skin. The second tool has a tiny hook at the end, which is used to puncture a small hole through the skin and then pull out a length of the vas which will be cut in two places and the ends sutured shut. Sometimes, a doctor may even cover each end with a flap of skin to seal the ends.

The procedure takes at most 10 minutes, said Dr. Naypa, and requires only local anesthesia. The wound needs only a band-aid to protect it from infection. The men who had had NSV's that day said the only time they felt pain was during the injection. Still, after the procedure, the men were handed painkillers to deal with the soreness when the anesthesia wore off.

* * *

"GOOD and thorough counseling," said Dr. Jose Rodriguez, "chief of party" of Management Sciences for Health, the NGO that manages the "matching grants program" for the DOH and USAID, is the secret to an effective promotion campaign for non-scalpel vasectomy in a locality.

After covering the launch in Barangay Alegria, we proceeded to Glan town where an orientation session and training for barangay health workers was being wrapped up. This is the first step in the "counseling chain," where grassroots health volunteers first learn about the procedure and are trained to respond to questions. "Most important is that couples—especially the men—realize that the procedure is permanent, that they cannot change their minds afterwards," says Dr. Rodriguez. After talking with the BHW, men who volunteer for the procedure are told to sign up at the local health center where they undergo more counseling. And when they return to the health center for the procedure itself, they are given one last chance to ask all the questions still bothering them.

Even more counseling is necessary after the procedure. In Alabel, Dr. Rodriguez met with the first 10 men (in all, 16 were "vasectomized"), to warn them that unless they used some form of protection, they could still make their wives or partners pregnant. Though a recovering patient needs only two days' rest before doing heavy manual labor or engaging in sex, he must wait for three months or 25-30 ejaculations, whichever comes first, before he can be sure that he can no longer impregnate his partner. In the meantime, the couple could either use a condom (which is why instructions on condom use are part of the post-procedure counseling) or the wife could use another form of protection in the meantime. Most ideal, said Dr. Rodriguez, is the injectable Depo-Provera since one injection provides three months' worth of protection.

* * *

BUT even after the procedure, the men and their wives still brought up what Dr. Rodriguez smilingly refers to as "the most frequently asked questions" about NSV.

One man worked up the courage to ask about the effect of the procedure on his masculinity. "*Ma-bayot ka ba?*" asked Dr. Rodriguez in Cebuano. The answer: an emphatic no. The procedure only affects the transport of sperm to the ejaculate fluid. After an NSV, a man is still fully capable of achieving erection and ejaculation, but not impregnation. "If after the procedure, a man starts taking male lovers, maybe he was already gay before," said Dr. Rodriguez.

"My neighbors say it's dangerous to have a 'vasectomized' man in the neighborhood because he can then have sex with any woman without fear of getting her pregnant," another man said. "A sexual predator will prey on other women and betray his wife with or without a vasectomy," Dr. Rodriguez pointed out. And in such a case, perhaps an NSV would blunt the potentially tragic consequences of the man's sexual irresponsibility.

Certain bias

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

FROM TIME immemorial, I have heard it said (and I'm sure you have, too) that the Spaniards deliberately withheld education from the majority of Filipinos. When it is pointed out that there were *escuela pias* or even parish schools, it is argued that these did not teach the sciences or liberal arts but confined themselves to religion. As for the universities and colleges (Santo Tomas, Ateneo, Letran), they were all inferior (presumably to Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, etc).

In this regard, it will do us well to listen to Dr. Fernando Zialcita of the Ateneo who writes:

"It's important to note that public, compulsory education worldwide was a 19th century invention that followed the Industrial Revolution. The public schools in the Philippines—as in Spain and France—ran into problems because of finances. In Eugene Weber's monumental book on the French peasantry, he points out that schools were located by cesspools, that classrooms were but stables, teachers were often ex-soldiers who learned to read and write in the army. Still, there were successes in the Philippines. Thus, the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal says that the Philippines and Japan were outstanding in the 19th century for the attention paid by the governments to education. Read 'The Asian Drama.' Context is important in historical interpretation."

And in case you're wondering why there is this attachment to the English language among Filipinos, the Philippine History Group of Los Angeles represented by Roberto Mercado claims that: "The Americans won the hearts and minds of the Filipino subjects by sending, beginning in 1901, to the archipelago hundreds of American teachers (who were called the 'Thomasites,' as the first wave came on board the American transport ship, USS Thomas) and by establishing public elementary schools, high schools and state universities. The United States also started sending brilliant Filipino high-school and college graduates to study in American colleges and universities. The first 100 Filipino students (called 'pensionados') left for the United States in 1903. And the American colonizers forced even the Jesuits to replace the Spanish Jesuit priests with American Jesuits.

"Of course, the Spanish friars established universities such as the University of Santo Tomas in Manila (which predated Harvard University by 50 years) and even an older university in Cebu (the San Carlos University, that the Jesuits established and which is now run by the SVD). But education during the Spanish regime was actually limited to the few scions of the well-to-do Filipino (native) families and the Spaniards who intermarried with the Indios. Many of the premier schools such as the Ateneo schools of the Jesuits were located in Manila and later in some big cities in the Philippines. The Spanish colonial authorities did not force Filipino children to go to public schools, very few of which were organized in the first place. The best education could be had often in the seminaries that the friars established to turn out Filipino priests. But often, as the religious put it, many are called but few are chosen to become friars or members of the clergy."

Since we know little of education in other countries in Asia during the 19th century, it's difficult for us to compare the friars, who have been accused of knowing squat, to other teachers in the region. Nor do we have books on 19th century education in Indonesia or Malaysia which were colonies as well. So that we can remove some of the cobwebs that befuddle us and learn that nothing is ever totally black or totally white, we really should encourage history students to research, write and publish on the subject.

Perhaps a century is too little time to look objectively at our former colonizers. Certainly, our attitude toward America veers from slavish imitation and adulation to utter dislike. One wonders if there's nothing in between. In this weather, either emotion should be considered unhealthy.

Another opinion that will raise hackles is the Los Angeles group's contention that "based on our studies of primary and secondary sources—Spain did not profit from colonizing the Philippines. For a period of more than 300 years, the Spanish treasury in Madrid subsidized the expenses of its bureaucracy in Manila, Cebu, Vigan, Nueva Caceres (Naga), Iloilo and other provincial capitals and, of course, the cost of fielding religious missionaries needed in Christianizing the archipelago. The Spanish colonizers never found anywhere in the Philippines commercial quantities of the spices, gold and silver that it sought (and found in other colonies such as Mexico, Peru and other South/North American territories). So, ergo, there was no fortune in gold and silver that the Spaniards hoarded in Manila and which could have been captured by the Filipino revolutionary soldiers or even by the American invaders."

"Even the much-heralded profits from the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade did not really go to the Spanish treasury in Manila. The profits went to the pockets of some Spanish officials (both civil and religious) and the traders from the Hispanic, Chinese and Filipino communities of Manila and Acapulco. The galleons carried very few items manufactured in the Philippines. Most of the cargo carried on board came from China (silk, jewelry pieces in gold or silver setting, ceramic plates and decor, clothing, etc.). And the undisputed fact was that the galleons—on their way back to Manila—carried from Acapulco Mexican silver pesos, which represented payment of the goods brought to Mexico and which currency was the legal tender at that time in the Philippines."

Date before summer

YOUNG BLOOD

C.R. Benite

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IT was two days before she would take the boat back to her hometown. The semester was over and it was my last chance to be with her before the summer began.

I texted her early in the afternoon to ask if we could be together later that day. She texted back saying she was in school. I went there to fetch her.

I wasn't really certain that she would agree to go out with me. After months of disastrous courtship, all I had seen were signs that we couldn't be any more than friends. But when she agreed to go with me, it was no surprise. She was the only person I knew in this crazy world for whom the adjective "sweet" perfectly fits. And she was still my friend.

Earlier that semester, I gave her our writing project in English which I seized as an opportunity to pour out my heart. When we met the next day, she was almost hysterical. She demanded to know why. But unlike other girls, she didn't consider it reason enough to avoid me. She only told me to revise my work.

She had shrugged off the whole thing, leaving me without an idea of where I was in her heart. Now I wanted to know my fate two days before she went home for vacation.

We first planned to go to the movies, but I changed my mind and asked if she would like to have some *halo-halo* instead, thinking it would not be very romantic to spend our date in a dark place. The open air was much better for serious questions. Besides, I knew she loved *halo-halo.*

We waited for more than an hour inside the FX van since it took that long to be filled with passengers. I didn't mind. There was so much for us to talk about, both of us being lovers of ideas. We didn't always agree on things because where she had her own bright ideas about life, I took more time thinking about the iniquities of the world and some radical solutions to them. But she was always open-minded.

One time, I was explaining Marxism to her. She asked me a few times what I wanted to happen in the world. Then she pointed to the fish in the small aquarium of her dormitory. The fishes, she noted, were not engaged in any struggle.

As we traveled toward Legaspi, we passed what looked like the ruins of a castle (or so I wanted to believe). "I would like to have a picture of that," she said.

The afternoon sun was on her face, so I asked her if I should fix the curtain. She said no. I remembered the picture I took of her when she was staring at the rising sun one morning.

We reached the place late in the afternoon. And it was obvious she loved *halo-halo.* While we ate, I consulted her about my plan to cut my long hair this summer since I was thinking of working in a fast-food outlet. I told her it took a year to grow to its present length, and now I had to cut it to land some lousy job. She laughed.

It was a wonderful afternoon. When we were finished, I told her very softly that I was so grateful that she could come with me. It wasn't a joke, but she laughed. Then she just told me it was okay because I was her friend.

She always emphasized that: I was her friend—just her friend. I found it cute, but I wanted us to be more than that.

We went to the church. I knew the day wouldn't have passed without her visiting at least a chapel in the town. She was both a spiritual and religious person, while I set religion aside and even think society would be so much better without it. She exuded joy from observing religious practices, making me doubt the wisdom of discarding the rituals I had observed since childhood. Once she cried after noting how confused about matters of the spirit the world was turning. But I knew she understood my weakness.

She said she would go inside the church to pray. I told her I would wait outside. She looked so beautiful. As we walked toward the gate I wondered how the grass and the pebbles felt on her sandals, feeling guilty that I was comfortable in my shoes. She had no complaints.

Soon it was dark and we had to be on our way home. The van we took was cozy and you could smell the person next to you. It was perfect for serious talk, except for the music that at first played, of all songs, "State of the nation."

I knew she was a little bit exhausted after a long day. She smelled sweet. Her breath was sweet. I told her I would be missing her when she went home and I would lose part of my sanity this summer because of her absence. She shushed me.

Her brother was celebrating his seventh birthday back home. In the dark, I thought of the girl beside me, the woman I love, her pretty face illumined by the blue light from her cellphone as she talked to him. I wanted to hold her hand. I wanted to put my head on her shoulders. But I didn't.

I remembered what she once told me about her home. She said she would be reading this summer, their place being one with nature, a perfect environment for imbibing ideas from books. Her hometown, where she had spent her elementary and high school years, was a simple place blessed with the simple joys of rural life. There you could go to the beach anytime you wanted to.

I remember what she once told me about their family. Her father, who didn't smoke, went to work while her mother took care of the house. She had three younger siblings who were getting good grades in school.

She also told me about her childhood friends who were waiting for her return. All of them were dear to her.

She told me how she cheated on her progress chart in spelling, how their high school class never took military training seriously, and how she was able to finish first year college without breaking the daily routine of going to school from the dormitory and back.

I don't know why, but on our last date before summer I never got to ask her anything about us, about whether we could be more than friends. But it was all for the best. What she would have told me would have been painful to hear. For all I know, she would build a fence between us, one that would exclude me.

Maybe I am not good enough for her. Maybe she is not ready for a commitment now, and perhaps forever. Now I feel as uncertain as I felt before.

But when I think more deeply about it, I begin to understand. Sometimes we can only say we love others when we stop trying to make them ours, and let them go with all the beauty and happiness that are already in them.

When I think of the woman I love, the many things she told me about life and all the things shining around her, it brings a smile to my lips. I smile the same way I smiled when I brought her back to the dormitory that day. And it comes from knowing she is happy with her life.

C.R. Benite, 18, is an incoming junior journalism student at Bicol University.

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LETTERS

Will RP, US sign new air pact after June talks?

THE FILIPINO air-riding public is casting a watchful eye on the ongoing positioning of the Philippine and US governments in connection with the stalled bilateral air negotiations between the two countries.

It looks like the prospects are good that both countries can agree finally on what is beneficial for them and this will be made known during the resumption of talks set some time in June this year.

The US delegation has expressed regret that the last talks in Washington "were not as productive as we had hoped they might be."

The urgency of the upcoming discussions has been made more necessary by the ever-growing SARS problem that has reduced prospects for the travel and tourism industries to recover from a slump that began years back.

The Americans understand very well the evolving dynamics of air travel. This is graphically illustrated by the massive losses sustained by the largest of American airlines.

PAL is not that large when compared to its US counterparts and neither is it that strong. This is the reason Filipinos should rally behind their flag carrier. Airlines are the frontliners in global business diplomacy and are the symbols of what a country stands for in foreign soil. This was the first act of then President Cory Aquino upon assuming power in 1986, to allow PAL to resume its international flights despite the still chaotic situation.

The US negotiating team knows full well what ought to be done in the upcoming give-and-take talks. Bullying an ally at a time of SARS and economic decline is not the way to treat a friend. Neither must the power of the strong always prevail.

Fairness is what these negotiations are all about. We trust America will listen to reason. What it wants is not necessarily what it needs.

Let not the lesson of Iraq invalidate this axiom.

BENNY V. LENTE,
3780 I Ayala Ave.,
Makati City

Epidemics, past and future (1)

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

A RECENT newscast featured a Filipino Catholic priest warning that SARS was a warning from heaven for the world to mend its evil ways. He proposed that there have been "more" epidemics in our "modern" era, an oblique way of saying the past was probably more virtuous and, presumably, plague-free.

Newsweek adopts a more secular but still alarmist approach in its May 5 issue, with a cover showing a face behind a mask, with frightened eyes and the theme: "SARS: Can it be Stopped? The New Age of Epidemics." Inside, an article "How Progress Makes Us Sick," talks about 30 new diseases that have cropped up since the mid-1970s, causing "tens of millions of deaths."

The fact is that epidemics, of new as well as old diseases, have been with us throughout history, so much so that the historian George Kohn was able to compile an entire Encyclopedia of Plague and Pestilence, published in 1995.

Before looking at these disease outbreaks let's differentiate the terms "outbreak," "epidemic" and "pandemic." What we see today is a SARS outbreak, its numbers still considered small, with about 7,000 reported cases in about two dozen countries. (The world's population is more than six billion and there are more than 100 countries.)

The term "epidemic" is used when a disease has spread out, affecting larger numbers in a particular area. If the disease continues to afflict larger numbers of people in many different countries, then we would have a global epidemic or a pandemic, as in the case of HIV/AIDS, with about 40 million people now living with the disease. The most serious pandemics in history have involved three diseases: plague, cholera and influenza. Looking through the historical accounts of these pandemics helps us to understand why diseases spread, and what might be done to reduce their adverse impact.

The first recorded plague pandemic occurred in the 6th century AD, spreading from Egypt to Ethiopia and the Mediterranean. There were 300,000 deaths in the city of Constantinople alone.

In the 14th century, we had the second plague pandemic, better known as the Black Death. It was believed to have started in China and spread to the rest of Asia and Europe, where the disease killed between a third and a half of all Europeans—about 20 to 25 million people—within five years.

The third pandemic of plague broke out in the 1890s and stretched out for many years with sporadic outbreaks in many parts of the world. Albert Camus' "The Plague" is based on one of those outbreaks. This pandemic officially ended only in 1959 but the plague still was found in many parts of the world with localized outbreaks.

Another disease that went on a pandemic rampage was cholera. In the 19th century alone, there were six pandemics, all of which affected the Philippines. The years in which these pandemics struck were: 1817-1823, 1826-1837, 1849, 1863-1866, 1881-1896 and 1899-1909. I will explain later why the last cholera pandemic was particularly devastating for the Philippines.

Flu, known locally as *trankaso*, is actually a very common disease with annual outbreaks in countries with more temperate climates. In the 20th century, pandemics occurred every one or two decades, the most serious one being the "Spanish flu" of 1917 to 1919, which killed between 25 million and 50 million people. I put "Spanish flu" in quotations because the disease did not originate in Spain, and affected people throughout the world, including the Philippines. There were two more flu pandemics first in 1957-1958 and 1968-1969, both originating in Asia. In the United States alone, these two recent flu pandemics killed some 100,000 people.

There are many lessons to pick up from the history of epidemics, but the most important here is the role of people—population concentration and population movements—in the spread of diseases.

First, diseases need a large pool of potential victims to spread. It is not surprising that so many of the pandemics first broke out in Asia with its large crowded cities. In Hong Kong, SARS outbreaks have been especially serious in the city's more crowded districts such as Kwun Tong, with a population density of 55,000 people per square kilometer. I checked our own statistics and found some of our barangays in Metro Manila have population densities reaching up to 100,000 people per square kilometer!

Note though that epidemics are not limited to cities. In rural areas, whenever populations are concentrated due to natural disasters or war, disease outbreaks are inevitable. Thus the sixth cholera pandemic hit the Philippines with particular ferocity because of the Philippine-American War, which created large refugee populations as well as a breakdown of social services. An estimated 200,000 Filipinos died from cholera, more than from American bullets.

Germs and epidemics spread only as quickly as people can travel. In the past, it would take years, even decades for epidemics to become global. The first smallpox outbreaks in Mexico occurred in 1520, brought over by the Spanish conquistadores and spreading slowly into other parts of Latin America. Eventually, smallpox reached the Philippines through this Spanish connection, arriving in 1591 on a ship from Mexico. Today, we see SARS rapidly spreading from one country to another through jet-age travel. Airport screening is now our main defense against the virus.

Traders and merchants have been implicated in many epidemics, but usually the outbreaks are associated with war and military campaigns, troops picking up or introducing diseases. For example, the flu epidemic of 1917-1919 spread more rapidly because of troop movements during World War I.

We need to be more sober in looking at these epidemics. Modern lifestyles and the ways in which we interact with fellow human beings, with animal species and with the environment certainly affect patterns of health and disease. But we shouldn't forget that modernity, too, has helped to reduce the extent of suffering and death, if not the incidence itself of these epidemics.

On Thursday, I will write about how people have responded to epidemics and pandemics, offering us lessons and choices for dealing with these diseases.

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China SARS cases stabilize, but WHO remains cautious

BEIJING—China reported fewer than 100 new SARS cases on Monday for the third straight day, raising hopes that it might finally be taming the killer virus, but the UN health agency said it was too early to say the worst was over.

China, the country hardest hit by the epidemic, logged 75 fresh cases, among the smallest totals in the three weeks since it started reporting its caseload honestly. The lowest figure so far was the 69 reported on Sunday.

Beijing accounted for 48 of Monday's new patients. Late last week the capital was still reporting 100 to 150 cases a day.

But the World Health Organization said it lacked the data needed to determine whether the tide had turned in China, where more than 250 people have died from SARS and 5,000 have been infected, the bulk of the global total of more than 7,000.

"We don't feel that we can make a real conclusion about how the epidemic is evolving," said spokesperson Mangai Balasegaram.

Officials also declined to let their guard drop after Premier Wen Jiabao said on a trip to the northern province of Shanxi the spread of the flu-like illness had not yet been fully controlled and still threatened China's vast countryside.

A SOLDIER sent by Taiwan's Army disinfects a street in the Wanhua area in Taipei on May 12 where an apartment building complex with some 140 homes has been quarantined after an elderly man died of SARS last week. Taiwan has reported 184 SARS cases with 18 deaths. AFP

Last week, a top Beijing health official said he did not know where about half the city's new SARS patients caught the disease.

China's death toll continued to tick up—12 more, taking the total to 252. Hong Kong reported a further three fatalities, raising the figure there to 218.

Deaths in Taiwan

Taiwan, which initially escaped the worst of the epidemic, reported six SARS deaths and 23 more SARS cases on Monday, taking the fatalities to 24 and the number of infections to 207.

Officials said nearly 200 people from a Taipei housing block had been found to be violating quarantine orders and ordered to stay at home or face hefty fines.

SARS first surfaced in southern China last November. Air travellers spread the virus worldwide, one taking the disease to Toronto, Canada's largest city, where 23 people have died.

There is no known cure for SARS and six to 10 percent of patients die from a disease that is passed on mostly by droplets through coughing and sneezing.

The outbreak has caused major damage to the economies of China and its southeast Asian neighbors, with tourism particularly hard hit.

Monday saw news that China has closed most accessible sections of the Great Wall, its best known tourist attraction, to help block the spread of the deadly virus. *Reuters*

Fly High

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is proud of our graduates who are now employed
in foreign airlines, resort hotels and
international airports as Commercial Pilots,
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Airport Managers and Airport Customs Brokers.

Responding to numerous complaints of air & noise pollution in the Philippine skies, Sen. Robert S. Jaworski, Chairman-Committee on Environment & Natural Resources of the Philippine Senate, made a surprise visit at the IAU Aviation Center. Shown here being assisted by IAU President, Dr. Jovenal B. Toring (right), Sen. Jaworski discusses with aerospace engineering students & airline pilots the subject of minimizing noise pollution from various aircraft that take off and land at Mactan Cebu International Airport.

Ricardo Cardinal J. Vidal
Scholarship Program

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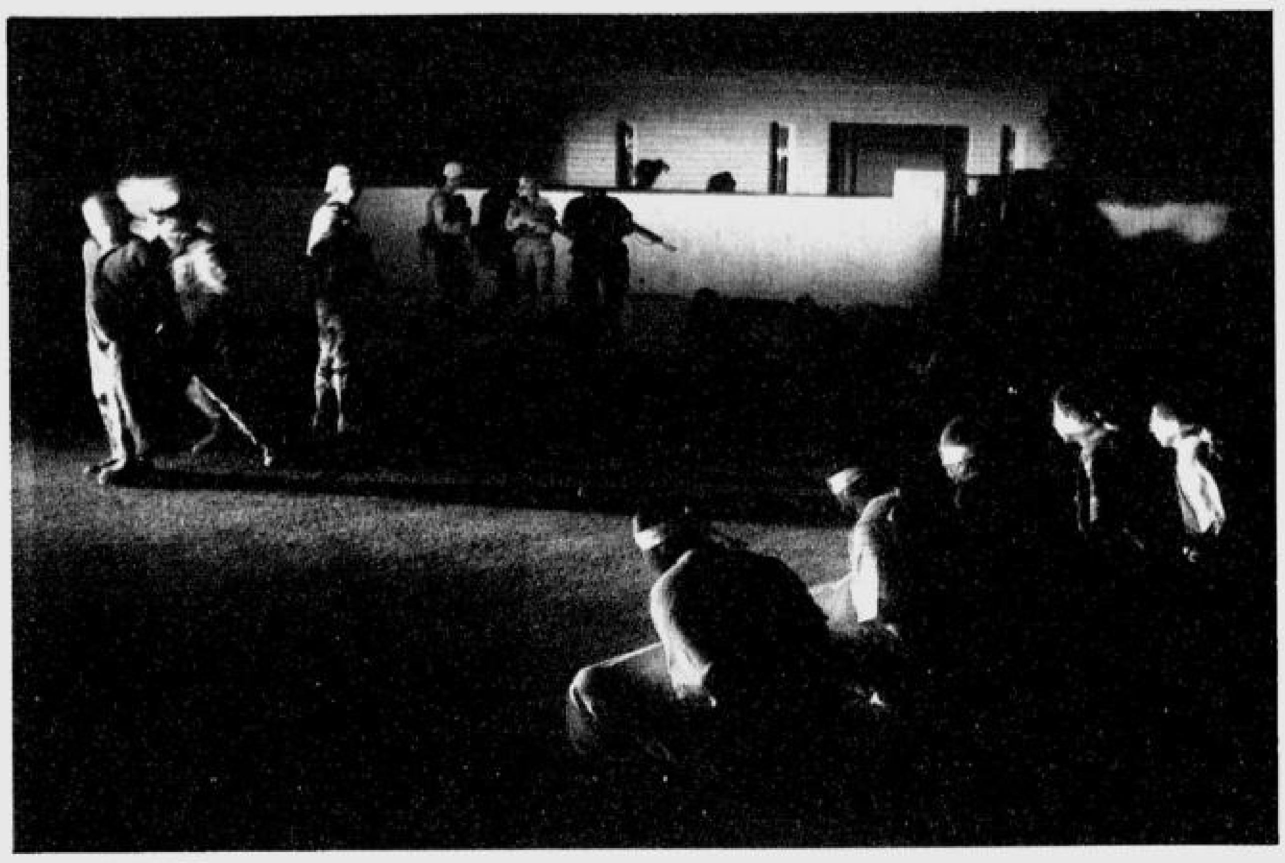


DEAD PARTY AP

A soldier of the 4th Infantry Division searches a detained man (left) as others sit blindfolded, following a raid against the Baath Party in Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown in Iraq, May 2. A message from US Gen. Tommy Franks delivered in Arabic by an announcer for the coalition's Information Radio declared Saddam Hussein's Baath Party dead Sunday.

A SOLDIER'S TALE

War nightmares

BAGHDAD—Baghdad fell more than a month ago but when gunner Joseph Aiello shuts his eyes at night he still sees one of his tank commanders—shot in the face during the battle for the city's airport.

"I had bad dreams after that," said Aiello, 22, one of many young soldiers here who are haunted by the horrors of war.

"When we entered Baghdad, I saw dozens of (Iraqi) bodies. I had never seen a dead body before. It's my worst memory," added Pfc. Eduardo Govea, a tank driver also in his twenties standing guard at the Iraqi foreign ministry.

To help the soldiers, the army turns to special combat stress control teams.

"When the battle begins, we see which units are exposed and we hold critical incident stress debriefings," said Sergeant First Class Will Lana, a counselor with the Third Infantry Division's combat team.

"The recurring themes of the nightmares are dead bodies, screaming women and babies." After particularly traumatizing incidents, Lana approaches the soldiers "to find out what happened, to have them talk about what they went through."

Another member of the counseling team, Cpl. Nicholas Locke, recalled one soldier who was scarred by an ambush in the southern city of Nasiriyah in March that left three soldiers dead.

Even far from the fighting, the soldier insisted on sleeping with his boots on in case he had to run.

Lana said the hardest part of his job was helping the soldiers with feelings of guilt after having seen their comrades die in combat. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

De-mining operations

KABUL, Afghanistan—Afghanistan's government prepared Monday to begin destroying stockpiles of anti-personnel mines for the first time in over two decades of warfare. The expected destruction—in a ceremonial blast on the outskirts of the capital—comes nearly a year after Afghanistan, one of the world's most heavily mined nations, signed the 1997 Ottawa Convention, the global treaty banning the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of land mines. It was unclear how much ordnance would be blown up, or how much remains in Afghanistan. **AP**

US double standard hit

VAJPAYEE

NEW DELHI—Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee accused the United States on Sunday of using selective sanctions to crack the whip against countries suspected of having nuclear programs. Vajpayee also warned against a slothful defense preparedness after the successful use of high-technology weapons in Iraq. "Some even continue to receive liberal economic assistance," he said in what diplomats construed was a reference to Pakistan and China. This, he said, was in contrast to India, which has "strictly exercised a self-imposed restraint" on transfer of nuclear, missile and dual-use technologies and material. "We have denied ourselves many lucrative contracts and joint ventures. We have never received any recognition for this," Mr. Vajpayee said.

The Dawn of Pakistan/Asia News Network

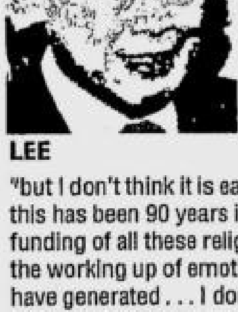
Kashmir violence

SRINAGAR, India—Four Indian policemen and an Islamic militant were killed and 10 people injured in twc attacks Monday on police guarding banks in Indian-administered Kashmir, police said. Police said rebels fired at a group from the Central Reserve Police Force in the main market of Kupwara, 100 km north of the summer capital Srinagar, killing two policemen. The security forces returned fire, killing a militant, a police spokesperson said. He said four policemen, two Army soldiers and one shopkeeper were injured in the 15-minute shootout near Kupwara's branch of the State Bank of India. ***AFP***

Palestinians escape

JENIN, West Bank—Four Palestinians escaped from the Israeli detention camp of Ofer near the West Bank city of Ramallah Monday before dawn, security sources on both sides said. Three of the prisoners on the run are from the radical Islamic Jihad group while the fourth was from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah group, an Islamic Jihad source said. According to Israeli public radio, they escaped after digging a tunnel under the barbed wire fence around the camp. Ofer camp holds more than 700 of the 3,400 Palestinian prisoners detained by the Israeli army, military sources said. ***AFP***

Terrorism worst than SARS



LEE

SINGAPORE—Terrorism is the more lasting threat to Singapore than SARS. And this goes some way in explaining why the Singapore government chose to stand with the US in its actions against Iraq. Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew said that the terrorism threat may not necessarily get worse now, "but I don't think it is easy to squelch it because this has been 90 years in the brewing." "The funding of all these religious schools worldwide, the working up of emotions, the hatred that they have generated . . . I don't think it will subside easily," he said. Terrorist groups will not be able to win, he added, but they can cause a lot of insecurity and damage.

The Straits Times/Asia News Network

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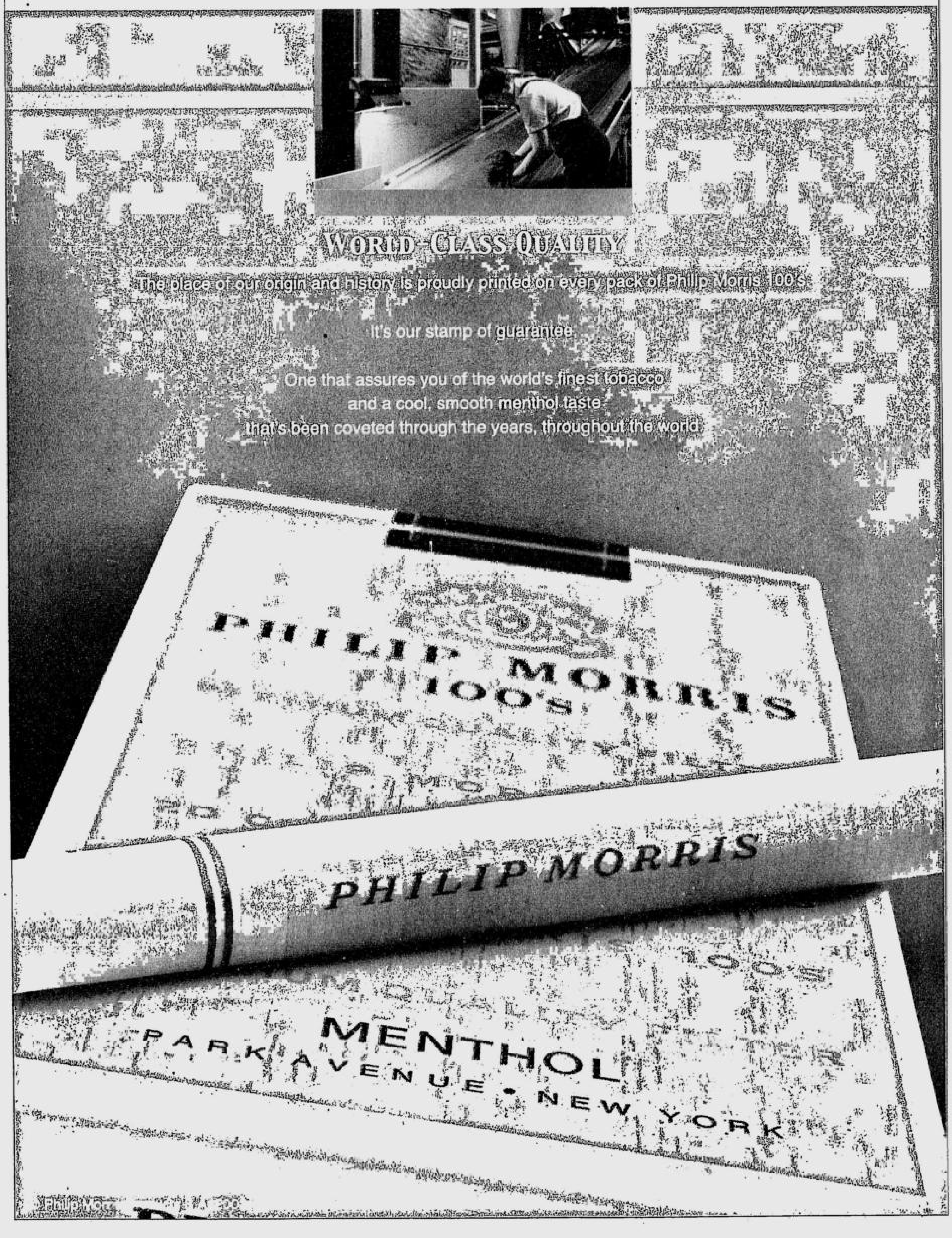

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Truck bomb rips Chechnya

At least 30 killed in explosion inside gov't compound

MOSCOW—A truck bomb ripped through a government compound in northern Chechnya on Monday, killing at least 30 people, the regional administration chief said.

Sultan Akhmetkhanov, the head of the Nadterechny region where the blast occurred, said a truck filled with explosives had damaged part of an administration building and the headquarters of the Federal Security Service in the town of Znamenskoye, as well as about eight residential houses.

At least 30 people were killed and two to three times that number were injured, Akhmetkhanov said. The ITAR-Tass news agency, citing Chechen administration officials, said more than 20 of the injured had been taken to the local hospital.

Chechen administration head Akhmad Kadyrov said at least 16 people were killed, the Interfax news agency reported.

Initial information indicated a truck carrying explosives exploded near the buildings, which were located in a government compound, ITAR-Tass said. The blast left a crater up to 16 meters in diameter and two meters deep, Akhmetkhanov said.

Russian Deputy Prosecutor General Sergei Fridinsky was heading to the scene, Interfax reported.

In December, a truck-bomb attack on the headquarters of the Moscow-backed Chechen administration in the capital Grozny killed at least 70 people. The truck had passed through numerous checkpoints and the blast exposed the still-fragile state of security even in the most heavily guarded part of the war-shattered region.

Kadyrov said the Znamenskoye attack showed that Russian and regional Chechen security services are unable to prevent all Chechen rebel attacks.

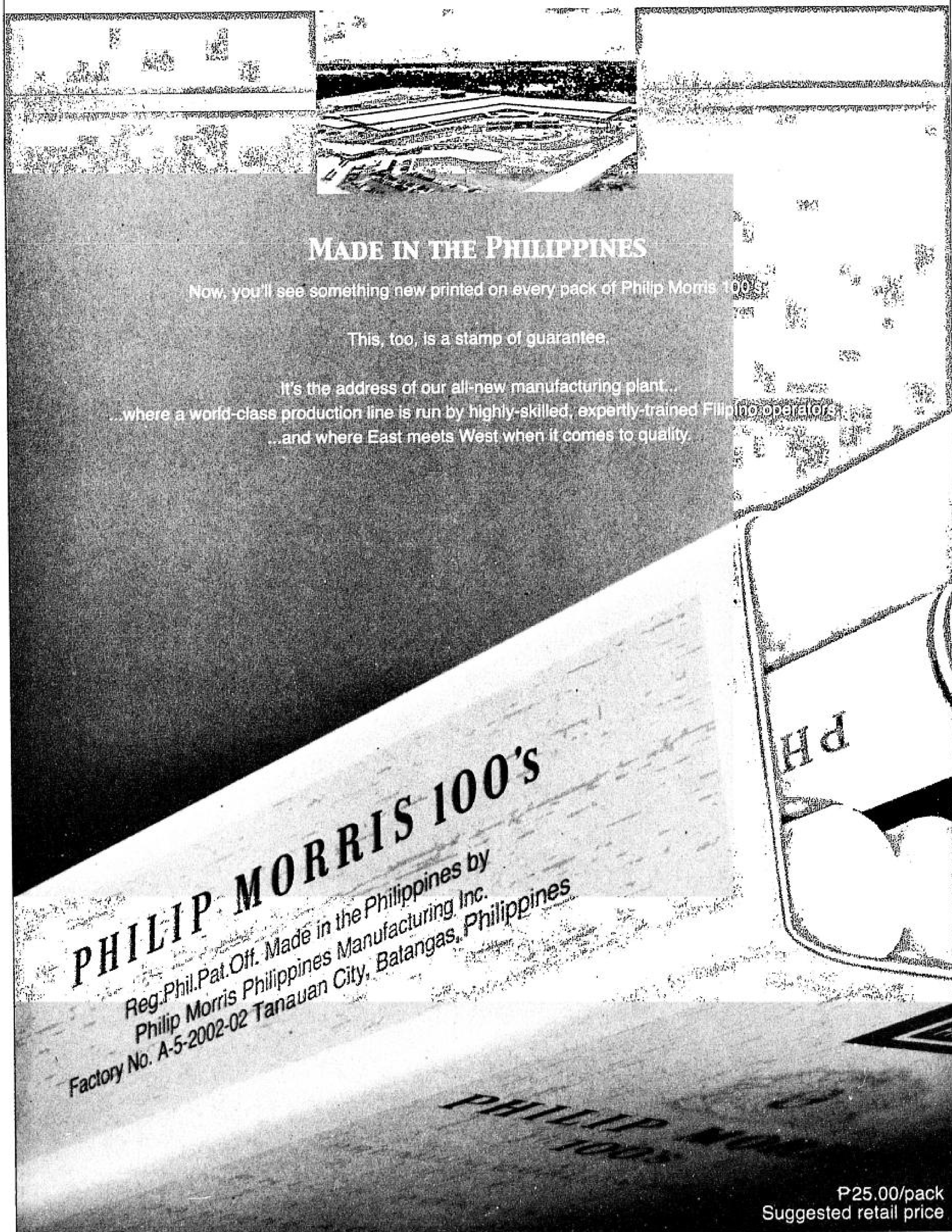
"It is necessary to be more alert and responsible, so that no cars with explosives can travel on the territory of the republic," Interfax quoted him as saying.

Northern Chechnya is considered the most stable part of the region. It was the first area to come under the control of Russian forces that entered the republic in 1999, starting the second war in a decade.

Znamenskoye houses a large refugee camp. *AP*

SITTING ON ONE'S HEAD REUTERS

A contortionist performs at the beginning of British pop star Sir Paul McCartney's concert in front of Rome's ancient Colosseum May 11. Taking the floor where gladiators once battled wild beasts and fought to the death, ex-Beatle Paul McCartney brought rock 'n roll to Rome's Colosseum for the first time.



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New York Times issues mea culpa

NEW YORK—The New York Times, considered by many to be the paragon of US daily journalism, published an unprecedented 7,000-word expose Sunday into how one of its rising star reporters committed widespread journalistic fraud on dozens of important news stories.

BLAIR

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Girl offers savings in piggy bank to enter school

BANGKOK—Getting into the right school is important—so important for some children and their parents that they're willing to "donate" large sums of money for a leg up on the competition vying for an acceptance letter.

One such schoolgirl, "Thip" (not her real name) told The Nation yesterday that she offered Baht 20,000 of her own money to a prestigious Bangkok secondary school in the hope that she would be admitted for the upcoming semester.

"It's my savings. I have about Baht 22,000 in my piggy bank," Thip said.

She does not live near her preferred school—and she failed the entrance exam by just a single point. But Thip wrote a letter to the school, promising the donation, when a letter from her father went unanswered. She says some friends had suggested she offer the money.

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"I didn't encourage my daughter to do it but I went with her to hand in the letter because I understand her determination," Thip's mother said.

The mother said her daughter would have been admitted if the school did not consider children living in its neighborhood first.

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A Thai education minister said that demands by the schools for large sums of money were wrong. *The Nation/Asia News Network*

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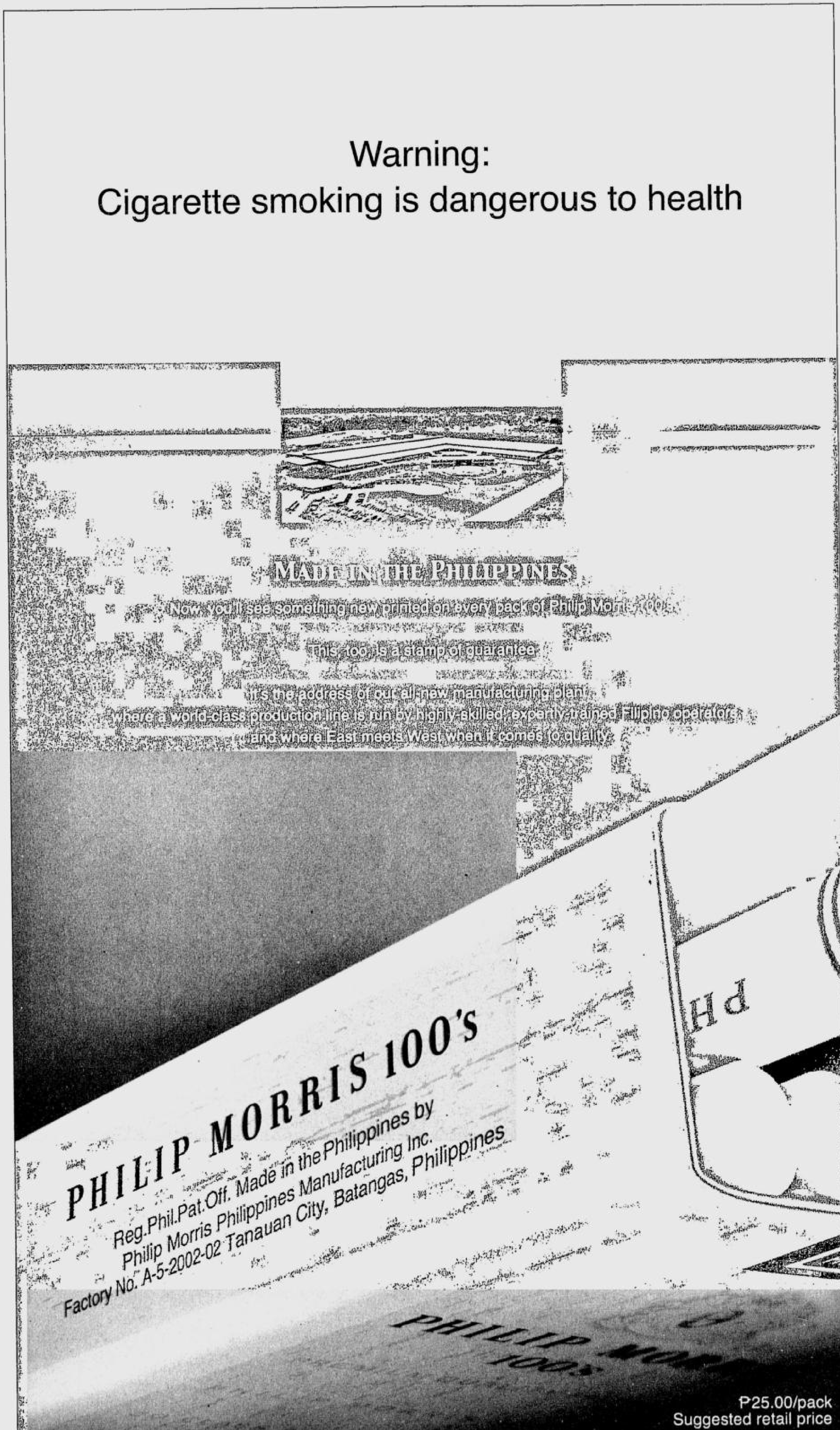

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Imelda vacates Olot estate

By **Joey A. Gabieta**, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

TAGLOBAN CITY—Imelda Romualdez Marcos has decided to temporarily give up her fight for the sprawling Olot estate and agreed to immediately vacate the property to avoid punitive action from the Supreme Court.

"I am giving it up. I don't want to be cited for contempt by the Supreme Court," she told the INQUIRER Sunday afternoon.

But the flamboyant former first lady still stressed that the 45-hectare property, located 25 km southwest of this city, belongs to the Romualdez family.

"I know the truth will come out," she said.

Earlier, Mrs. Marcos declared during her visit here on May 2 that she would not give up her claim on the estate she described as "sacred ground."

She then said she was ready to "die" defending the family's right to the property, which covers a nine-hole golf course, a swimming pool, residential and guest houses, a pavilion and a mausoleum.

The Supreme Court, in an April 28 decision, directed Mrs. Marcos to immediately vacate the property. Defiance of the order would mean contempt of court.

The High Tribunal also directed the sheriff of the Sandiganbayan and Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane to implement the order and arrest Mrs. Marcos or her representative if they do not heed the order.

Yesterday morning, lawyer Robert Sison, Mrs. Marcos' counsel, went to the Eastern Visayas office of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG-8) here to inform the agency of Mrs. Marcos' decision.

"We will leave the premises effective today. I will be coordinating with the hired security agency and inform them to respect the decision of the Supreme Court to leave the premises," he said.

The estate is guarded by six security personnel belonging to the People's Multi-Cooperative Agency.

Present during Sison's visit to the PCGG-8 office was assistant regional representative Salvador de Paz. He, however, declined to issue any comment. PCGG regional representative Renoir Dauag was in Manila.

Sison, however, stressed that the decision of Mrs. Marcos to leave the Olot premises was just meant to avoid possible citation of contempt by the High Tribunal.

"We are just abiding (by) the resolution (of) the Supreme Court. After all, the matter is just (a) temporary restraining order. The petition for review filed by the PCGG, as well as our comment have yet to be resolved," he explained.

The TRO, filed by the PCGG, was issued by the Supreme Court last Dec. 3, 2002 that directed the Sandiganbayan not to enforce its October 2002 ruling remanding back the property to the former first lady.

On May 7, Mrs. Marcos filed an urgent motion to lift the TRO issued by the Supreme Court on Dec. 3, 2002.

In her argument, Marcos said that when the PCGG sought for a TRO, she had already taken possession of the Olot estate as early as October 2002 or one month before the PCGG filed for a TRO.

She claimed that the PCGG filed its petition for the issuance of a TRO last November with the Supreme Court issuing the TRO on Dec. 3, 2002.

"Clearly, the petitioner has, thus, misled the Honorable Court. There was nothing more to restrain since at the time of the filing of its petition with a prayer for issuance of a TRO, petitioner (PCGG) already knew then that the respondent (Marcos) was already in possession of the Olot resthouse," Marcos said in her four page petition.

2 soldiers die, 9 wounded in Lanao clash

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Two soldiers were killed while nine others were wounded in clashes with Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels in Munai, Lanao del Norte on Saturday morning.

The soldiers, belonging to the 2nd Scout Rangers Battalion and the 26th Infantry Battalion, were separately patrolling Barangays Balintad and Panggao when they encountered the rebels.

Maj. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, 4th Infantry Division chief, told the INQUIRER that clashes, which were part of the pursuit operations launched against the attackers of Maigo town last month, were still ongoing.

Balaoing said he was going to meet with local officials of Lanao del Norte to discuss the operations that have already displaced some 8,000 people.

"We will identify the areas affected and address the needs of the evacuees," he said, adding that they also convinced some evacuees to return to their homes. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

UNCERTAINTY is reflected in the eyes of this soldier who awaits for instruction from his superior during his deployment to Maigo, Lanao del Norte where clashes with Moro rebels continue.

PDI PHOTO/EDWIN BACASMAS

Radioman's killer still free after 365 days

PAGADIAN CITY—A year after he was gunned down, the family of journalist Edgar Damalerio is still seeking justice.

Damalerio, a commentator of the Radio Philippines Network 9 dxKP and managing editor of the Zamboanga Scribe, was a Golden Dove awardee of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas for best in news and public affairs provincial category in 2001.

Two witnesses tagged PO1 Guillermo Wapile as the prime suspect in the murder. The witnesses, Edgar Amoro and Edgar Ongue, have gone into hiding after receiving threats.

On Jan. 30, a local court issued a warrant for Wapile's arrest. But even before the warrant could be served, Wapile had escaped from the police provincial headquarters here where he was restricted.

Wapile was then under the custody of his superior, Senior Supt. Pedrito Reyes, then police chief of Zamboanga del Sur.

Damalerio's wife, Gemma, has filed criminal and administrative charges against Reyes, accusing him of allowing Wapile to escape. *Hernan dela Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

29 solons back constituent assembly

CANDON CITY—The Northern Luzon Alliance (NLA), a group of representatives from three regions in Northern Luzon, has thrown its support for constitutional changes through a constituent assembly.

"We firmly believe that a constitutional change will do the country good," said Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson, president of the 29-member NLA.

Singson said NLA members from the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley and Cordillera regions were initially split on the mode of change but eventually decided to support a House resolution that would effect amendments through a constituent assembly.

Singson was leading a "slim majority" of NLA members who favor changes through a constituent assembly while Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos, NLA vice president, was leading the group supporting the constitutional convention mode.

Singson said the NLA would ensure that the general principles agreed upon by lawmakers on charter changes would be followed.

He said members of the Senate and House of Representatives, after a series of meetings, had agreed that the 2004 elections would push through and any change in the Constitution would not benefit the incumbent representatives and senators.

Singson said a major proposed change in the 1987 Constitution is the shift from the presidential form of government to the parliamentary system.

He said they also want to amend the provision on the 40-60 (40 percent foreign and 60 percent Filipino) ownership and investment structure to attract foreign investors.

He said they are proposing at least a 51-percent share for foreigners in investments and businesses in the country.

"We are the only country in Asia that does not have this setup. How can we attract investors if they do not have control of their money?" Singson asked.

In Bacolod City, Negrense members of civil society, fearing that the Senate will eventually give in to the call of the Lower House for Charter Change through a constituent assembly, yesterday issued a statement opposing such a move for being "highly suspect."

The Peace Advocates of Negros-No to Charter Change (Pannocha) called on the Senate to reject the proposed joint resolution calling for Charter Change through a constituent assembly.

They said they do not trust the present members of Congress to amend the Constitution.

The group said it does not believe House Speaker Jose de Venecia when he said that the Constituent Assembly would not lift term limits.

"Given (a) blanket authority to change the charter through a constituent assembly, the first thing they (would) do is to extend their tenure so that they can stay in power longer. The elections scheduled for 2004 will be canceled," the Pannocha said.

They echoed the call of Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra for members of Congress to put an end to all these discussions on Charter Change.

"We strongly reject the proposal that our politicians formulate the amendments by convening themselves into a constituent assembly," Navarra has said.

Navarra believed that amendments to the Constitution are best left to a constitutional convention. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Countdown for Justice

WAPILE

IT IS exactly 365 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

OFWs cautioned on pyramid, multi-level marketing schemes

By **Ma. Diosa Labiste**
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—"Don't fall for the dubious. If it's too good to be true, it must be."

These were some of the words of caution given by lawyers, bankers and government agencies to overseas Filipino workers, who have been targets of pyramid scams, Ponzi schemes and other marketing groups.

In a forum on May 10, OFWs here admitted that only illegal recruitment agencies were duping them before. Today, pyramid scams and other illegal multi-level marketing schemes have victimized them and their spouses who were lured by the promise of exorbitant returns.

Scores of OFWs here were among those defrauded by Mateo Management Group (MMG), which reportedly bilked many Ilonggos of P100 million until the bubble burst late last year.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas said the city government organized the forum to help OFWs decide where to put their hard earned money.

Lawyer Cristina Montelibano of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), said pyramid and Ponzi schemes are common in Iloilo. The pyramid scheme is one where those at the top entice others to bring in others in the widening triangle of selling or investing.

Ponzi scheme, named after Charles A. Ponzi, an Italian immigrant in the US who defrauded hundreds of investors in the 1920s, promises investors high returns of the money they sunk in. The interest is often many times more than what is offered by a saving or time deposit in banks.

Montelibano said she had warned several investors who visited SEC about MMG modus operandi last year. "But they said the MMG checks were still good and they (were) afraid to rock the boat because they wanted to recoup their capital," she said.

Montelibano said her office would soon transmit to the Department of Justice some 170 affidavits of victims of MMG's scheme.

Romeo Reyes of the Iloilo Bankers Association asked OFWs to consider investing in retail treasury bonds, time deposits and other instruments that earn higher interest than savings deposits.

Reyes told OFWs not to hesitate to talk to their bankers, and trust them. He said many of those duped by pyramid schemes were paying in cash, an indication that they were keeping their money at home.

Lawyer Eduardo Jalbuna, of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Iloilo, also appealed to OFWs to be careful in signing contracts and other documents related to investments and other moneymaking schemes.

"Consult your friendly lawyer," he said.

OFWs who attended the forum requested that the information on making sound investments should be printed in booklet form and distributed to OFWs here and abroad and their families.

ROUNDUP

Army promotions

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—At least five military officers in Central Mindanao, including the ground commander in the February assault on the Buliok Complex, have been promoted to one-star rank. Col. Carduzo Luna of the Army's 602nd Infantry Brigade, credited for the military's victory over the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Pikit, North Cotabato; Col. Alexander Yano of the 601st Infantry Brigade; Col. Antonio Romero III of the 603rd Infantry Brigade; Col. Agustin Dema-ala of the 301st Infantry Brigade and Col. Eduardo Lena of the 54th Engineering Brigade were among the 27 senior Army colonels whose promotions were signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on April 16. Yano, 49, became the country's youngest brigade commander and was the first member of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1976 to become a general.

Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 soldiers wounded

DAVAO CITY—Two soldiers, including an officer, were wounded when some 20 NPA rebels ambushed the military vehicle they were riding in near the boundary of Pantukan and Banay-Banay towns, Davao Oriental on Friday. The victims were identified as Capt. Antonio Serrano, commanding officer of the 27th Special Forces Company, and one of his escorts, Sgt. Marlon Tequil. Maj. Nixon Fortes, commanding officer of the 8th Special Forces Battalion, said Serrano and Tequil were on their way to this city when they were fired at in Barangay Puntalinao at 12:45 p.m. They were rushed to the Army hospital in Camp Panacan here, where they were declared in stable condition.

Joselle R. Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau

120-year jail term

BACOLOD CITY—A male resident of Cauayan, Negros Occidental, was sentenced Thursday to 120 years in prison for raping three times his pregnant married daughter. Calling the crime as "repulsive" and condemning the accused for reducing himself "lower than the lowliest animal," Judge Henry Aries of the Kabankalan Regional Trial Court ruled that the father deserved to rot in prison for three counts of rape. The daughter was 25 years old when her 52-year-old father raped her on July 5, 7 and 9, 1996.

Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

2 boys drown

CEBU CITY—Two boys drowned in the river near their home in Sitio Kabulihan, Barangay Ilihan, Toledo City, on Tuesday. Samsom Canonigo, 11, and his brother Samboy, 9, were declared missing earlier Tuesday and were found by policemen unconscious at 3 p.m. on the banks of Kabulihan's Subangdaku River. Police said the search team rushed the boys to a hospital in Toledo but doctors pronounced them dead on arrival. Police said a flash flood might have occurred while the boys were taking a bath in the river since it was raining during that time.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Dengue downs 200

COTABATO CITY—More than 200 children were downed by dengue fever in Central Mindanao last month. The regional Department of Health said five of the six victims, who died of the disease, came from North Cotabato. The latest fatality was a year-old boy from this city, according to city health officer Abdullah Dumama. Because of the large number of children afflicted with the mosquito-borne disease, Renato Ty, DOH-12 spokesperson, said they have intensified their anti-dengue drive. *Rosa-May V. de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Grandma jailed

LEGAZPI CITY—Tired of doing laundry work, a 70-year-old woman tried drug pushing but the job landed her in jail. Salvacion Abion, of Barangay Sabang here, together with her son Salvador and daughter-in-law Virginia, were arrested by police during a buy-bust operation Friday. Authorities recovered almost a kilo of marijuana in Salvacion's house and other drug paraphernalia. Salvacion said she did not want to beg in the streets, so she agreed to sell marijuana. She said she could not ask for help from her children, who are also poor.

Joyce M. Mejillano and Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Tuition increase

LEGAZPI CITY—Twenty-one schools in Bicol will increase their tuition this school year, Commission on Higher Education Regional Director Dominador Peralta said during a meeting with the Albay Press Association here. Peralta said the tuition increase this year averaged 10 percent. Peralta said fewer schools were increasing tuition compared to previous years, possibly due to protests and complaints from students and parents.

Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Village chief killed

CALATAGAN, Batangas—Armed men claiming to be New People's Army members shot dead on Saturday the barangay chair of Bagong Silang in this town. Sixto Atienza was walking home at 1 a.m. on Saturday when he was shot twice in the head. Atienza, 44, was also chief of the Balayan Bay Bantay Dagat Network.

Mel Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LAGING NASA
ORAS AKO

IN FASHION BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO
Lucrasia Hernandez, an employee of a regional trial court in Davao City, wears a surgical mask as a preventive measure against SARS. Davao City Executive Judge Paul Arcangel has ordered the use of masks by employees who are in direct contact with people, particularly migrant workers, applying for renewal of clearances.

Fears continue as local execs take steps vs SARS

By The PDI Bureaus

AS FEAR continues to grip the uninformed about the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and those found to have the symptoms are shunned like the plague, local officials and health authorities prepare for a possible onslaught of the virus.

In Cebu City, the fear of getting infected with SARS proved to be a harrowing experience for a young woman who just returned from Hong Kong.

The woman, a resident of Talisay City, found herself not only being avoided by neighbors but at the receiving end of irate comments from those who disapproved of her appearing in public, days after she returned home from the Chinese territory.

Joy Tumulak, barangay chair of Lawaan Uno, said the villagers feared that the 20-year-old woman might be carrying the SARS virus.

The woman went to Hong Kong during the Holy Week and returned to Cebu on May 3.

A few days later, her neighbors, upon learning that she had come home, went to Tumulak to ask the barangay leader to take action to prevent the spread of SARS virus.

Tumulak said the people were also very apprehensive, especially as the woman had gone to several places since she arrived.

Some people even asked him what medicine to take, so that they would not be infected with SARS, he said.

The woman has shown no symptoms of SARS but her neighbors have remained wary since the incubation period of the virus is up to 14 days, Tumulak said.

Dr. Juanito Zuasula, regional epidemiologist in Central Visayas, told Tumulak to just ask the woman to isolate herself for two weeks as a precautionary measure. The woman agreed.

The Talisay City health officer also assured Tumulak that he would visit the barangay and help educate the residents.

Meanwhile, a woman flight attendant, who developed a fever five days after returning from Hong Kong on May 1, and her year-old son, who also developed fever, are to be taken off the list of suspected SARS cases if their conditions continue to improve.

Zuasula said the woman and her son had already recovered from their fever.

Isolation rooms

An isolation room intended for patients suspected of being afflicted with SARS will be put in place at the Tacloban City Hospital.

But this early, several staff members registered their anxiety about, if not opposition to, the plan of Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez Sr.

The mayor said putting up an isolation room at the government-run 25-bed hospital in Barangay Marasbaras was part of the city government's preparation in case a SARS case was detected in the city.

Romualdez said he had asked the city council to allocate P3 million from its calamity fund to construct the isolation room.

"SARS is a calamity that we need to address," he stressed.

The isolation room will be the second government-run hospital in the city, after Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC), to put up the facility for SARS cases.

Romualdez had earlier opposed the confinement of a suspected SARS patient—identified only as JP, a migrant worker who came from Hong Kong—at the EVRMC.

JP was discharged from isolation after it was diagnosed that she only suffered from a viral infection.

But the decision to put in place an isolation room at the Tacloban City Hospital was not welcomed by many in the hospital staff.

An official at the hospital, who requested anonymity, said that while the intention of the mayor was laudable, "we are not yet ready to accept a SARS case in the hospital."

"We have yet to be trained how to handle a SARS patient. And besides, just like everybody else, we are also afraid that a SARS patient will be in our midst," the official said.

The official asked the mayor to "rethink" his decision, as she projected that once a SARS patient is brought to the city hospital, "one might see many of our doctors and nurses filing (for) emergency leaves just to avoid being designated as attending doctors or nurses."

The hospital has six doctors and 11 nurses.

Samal casino

In Mindanao, officials continue to prepare against SARS as fears heightened after the Department of Health announced that the country now has 10 verified cases.

Councilors in Davao City said the Malaysian-owned Samal Casino in Penaplata in the Island Garden City of Samal could serve as an isolation area for SARS patients in the Davao region.

"We are planning to (ask) Mayor (Rogelio) Antalan if we could use the old hotel in his place as isolation area for possible SARS victims, because right now we don't have an isolation room for patients infected with SARS (in the city)," Councilor Nilo Abellera said.

The government-run Davao Medical Center (DMC) currently uses its chapel as quarantine area for suspected SARS cases.

Abellera, chair of the council's Committee on Health, said the DMC liturgical room was so small and could accommodate only a few patients.

The city council was to enact an ordinance providing for a two-week quarantine period for overseas Filipino workers coming from SARS-infected countries.

Councilor Jimmy Dureza said there would be no exemption.

In Iligan City, health authorities said they wanted to convert the facilities of the foreclosed National Steel Corp. (NSC) into diagnostic centers.

Dr. Livey Villarin, head doctor of the City Health Office, said the move was in connection with efforts to prevent the spread of the disease in the city.

"We admit that the city indeed is not yet capable of combating SARS. This is why we have thought of improvising SARS prevention facilities out of the NSC. Isolating the patients is the least that we can do as of now," Villarin told the INQUIRER.

In a letter, Villarin asked NSC manager Ruben Pinaroc to allow health officials to use NSC's training center as a screening center and its infirmary as an isolation center.

But Antonio Seva, the factory's security manager, said they had to wait for the go-signal of their Manila-based officials.

Villarin said they also imposed stricter rules on incoming vessels from countries with confirmed SARS cases, like Hong Kong, China and Singapore.

"A quarantine officer will board the docking ship to examine its passengers and crew members. If the examinees exhibit SARS-related symptoms, they will have to undergo screening and isolation procedures. After those, they would be turned over to the regional health center in Cagayan de Oro City," Villarin said.

In Cagayan de Oro City, however, Mayor Vicente Emano announced his objection to a proposal that the Northern Mindanao Medical Center (NMMC) be used as a quarantine area for SARS cases in the region.

During the SARS Summit in Manila, it was agreed that the NMMC, Northern Mindanao's main hospital, be used as a SARS quarantine area.

"We are not going to allow that. We will not gamble with the lives of the people," Emano said.

The mayor said there were hospitals in every province in the region which could be used to quarantine suspected SARS patients.

He asked the city council to pass a resolution objecting to the plan to bring suspected SARS patients to the NMMC for quarantine and treatment.

Task Forces

Task forces and committees have been formed in various parts of Southern Luzon, including the cities of Calapan, Sorsogon and Puerto Princesa, last week.

Calapan Mayor Arnan C. Panaligan said an Anti-SARS Task Force led by city health officer Lisa Llanto was directed to conduct a comprehensive information and education campaign. The agency will also monitor people coming from SARS-infected areas for proper quarantine measures.

Panaligan appealed to the people to follow instructions from the DOH, like strengthening the immune system through intake of vitamins and healthy food, exercise, by washing hands before eating, and keeping the surroundings clean.

In Sorsogon, provincial health officer Dr. Oscar Garcia said his office had created SARS task forces at the provincial and municipal levels and had started distributing masks to health workers.

Local governments should devise ways of guarding all points of entry in Palawan to block the spread of SARS, according to provincial epidemiologist Elaine Maano.

Maano also called on barangay officials and health workers to be on their toes for people coming from SARS-infected places.

The provincial government has formed an action plan that will mobilize every sector in society.

Task Force SARS was formed to address different needs and concerns. Six working committees were created to respond to every problem area.

Prayers

Even churches mobilized their parishioners to pray for protection from the SARS virus.

In Pangil, Laguna, residents turned to their patroness against scourge and pestilence for the extermination of SARS.

The Apostolate of Prayer and Divine Mercy organizations, headed by Anselma Querido and Norma Buendicho, spearheaded the daily novena to Our Lady of the O at 5 p.m., starting Tuesday and the novena to the Divine Mercy every Friday at 3 p.m. The novena is followed by a penitential procession. *Jhunnex Napallacan and Joey Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau; Anthony S. Allada, Ellen P. Red, Jeffrey P. Maningo and Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Madonna T. Virola, Romulo Ponte, Emir Gamis and Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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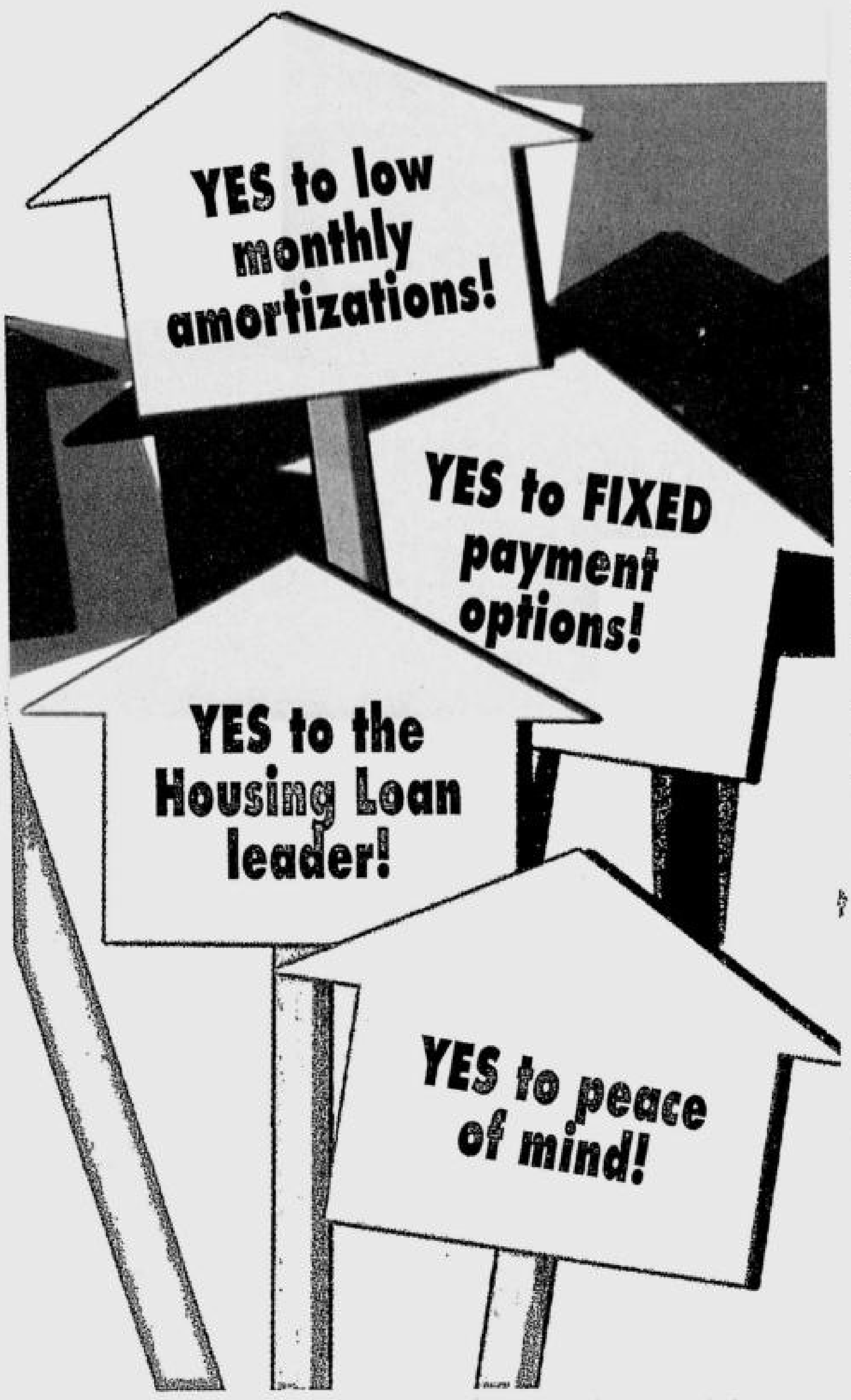
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Farmers & Fisherfolk Month

DA launches 'Sigla't Yaman sa Kanayunan'

The month of May is the time when the Department of Agriculture honors our farmers and fisherfolk as they are the backbone of our rural economy. Truly their activities exert the greatest direct impact on the quality of life of the majority of our people, particularly the poor.

Two-thirds of our population depends on the agricultural sector for their wherewithal. Yet it only accounts for one-fifth of all the goods and services our country produces, and a tenth of our exports.

To address this sad predicament, the Congress of the Philippines enacted on July 28, 1997 Republic Act 8435, otherwise known as the *Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act* or AFMA.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo mandated Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo to increase farmers income, generate direct and indirect employment and enhance food security.

These priorities concretely implement AFMA's lofty objectives in accelerating the *Ginintuang Masaganang Ani* banner programs aimed at alleviating poverty incidence in the country.

Sigla't Yaman sa Kanayunan or *Power to the Countryside* is the thematic strategy the Department of Agriculture now employs to accelerate rural productivity and tap its enormous potential for significant multiplier effects on the rest of the economy.

Every job created on or off-farm leads to at least three additional jobs from the economic activity spurred by any rural project. In addition to this, a thriving agriculture enables a larger number of our people to purchase goods produced by the industrial sector.

On a policy level, agriculture department is deliberately working for the reduction of smuggling and illegal importation, actively supporting the President's "Strong Republic Nautical Highway Project", expanding farmers credit, promoting biotechnology, encouraging rural investments from the private sector and re-evaluating trade reciprocities.

On the ground, Secretary Lorenzo is building strong, competitive food opportunities based on sound management fundamentals, global benchmarking, and a market-oriented approach.

The destinations are defined.

In *rice*, a 94% sufficiency level in 2003 and 97-100% sufficiency in 2004. For *corn*, the targets are 80% sufficiency from the present 67% and a reduction in prices to at most P8/kg from the current P8.64

For *livestock*, a 9.2% increase in the production of pork, 4.6% in backyard poultry, 3.14% in beef and a total loss prevention of P2.12 billion due to diseases. In *aquaculture*, a production increase by 37,000MTs; bangus by 25,000MTs and seaweeds by 151,000MTs.

In *sugar* we aspire for an increase in average tonnage from 59TC/ha to 75TC/ha, achieving self-sufficiency in 2005, while for *coconut* increase in yield from 0.8MT/ha (copra equivalent) to 1.5MT/ha by 2006.

Coffee shoots for a bean production of 60,000 tons in 2006 while *vegetables* go for a reduction of imports and PH losses to 7%.

Specific targets have also been marked for *mango, banana, papaya, calamansi and durian*.

HIGHLIGHTS

Agri Fair, Peoples Day top program

Presidential Proclamation No. 393 by President Corazon Aquino on May 21, 1989 declared the month of May of every year as "Farmers' and Fisherfolk's Month" in recognition of their invaluable contribution to nation building.

This year's month-long celebration kicked off with the opening of the agri-aqua and agri-machinery fair at the DA grounds on with a host of special clusters of activities among the country's 13 regions and the DA's different bureaus and attached agencies until the end of the month.

The fair includes an agri-aqua trade exhibit, a *tiangge* and a machinery fair showcasing the various agricultural products and the latest innovations in agricultural and fishery technology and equipment in the machinery and agricultural equipment exhibit.

It also aims to provide the entire agricultural and fisheries sector with adequate exposure to world markets.

Cluster 1 features the display and sale of products from the Northern and Central Luzon (Regions I, II, III, and Cordillera Administrative Region) on May 5-9 along with exhibits and presentations from the Bureau of Plant Industry, Philippine Coconut Authority, Sugar Regulatory Administration, Fiber Industry Development Authority, National Tobacco Administration, Cooperative Development Authority and National Agricultural and Fishery Council.

Cluster 2 on May 12-16 features the products of the National Capital Region, Southern Luzon and Bicol (Metro Manila, Regions IV-A, IV-B and V) and the agri-fishery exhibit of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management, Bureau of Post harvest and Research Extension, National Food Authority, National Irrigation Administration, Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority, National Nutrition Council, and Philippine Rice Research Institute.

Cluster 3 on May 19-23 will feature products of the Visayas (Regions VI, VII, and VIII) and exhibits from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Bureau of Agricultural Research, Quedancor, Agricultural Training Institute, Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation and the Agricultural Credit and Policy Council.

Cluster 4 featuring Mindanao composed of Regions IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, and Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao will display their products on May 26-30. Also, agencies safeguarding and monitoring the livestock industry led by the Bureau of Animal Industry, National Meat Inspection Commission, Philippine Carabao Center, National Dairy Authority and the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics will have their exhibits.

Each cluster is also expected to provide a cultural presentation opening each week of festivities.

People's Day marks a first!

For the first time in DA's history, ***Peoples Day*** has been scheduled every Wednesday within the Farmers and Fisherfolk Month from 10am to 4pm.

The facility was opened on instructions of Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr., in order to enhance citizens participation in DA affairs and promote transparency in governance.

"Any farmer or fisherman can come to the Department about any concern and be attended to without having to arrange for an appointment," Lorenzo said.

A desk in the lobby area of the Department has been set up to represent key sectors to attend to any probable visiting clientele.

Ka Cito Lorenzo shares a light moment with farmer scholars from Regions XI and ARMM who taught him how to harvest sweet camote tops under the GMA Cares "Pagkain para sa Masa" Program. The field school is run by the DA regional office in cooperation with the University of Southern Mindanao in Kabacan, North Cotabato. A parallel project has produced more than 30,000 quality planting materials distributed to poor Muslim communities in Camp Abubakar and nearby areas.

(AQPhoto)

Lorenzo presents roadmaps to sufficiency and exports

Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. proclaims the new Department of Agriculture as being ***"May Dating Na, Aksyon Pa!"***. And having been in office for just five months, the former chief executive officer of a greatly successful Filipino multinational corporation has turned the gargantuan department and its nine bureaus and 23 attached agencies into a whirlwind of activity and purpose that DA employees now regard his infectious message as a sort of a "gospel of boom."

For instance, the President has given him a year to install 12 regional tilapia hatcheries around the country. Lorenzo completes this mission next month, in half the time.

People believe him when he says the programs will work because they see in the Secretary more of a farmer of substance than a politician of promise. "My hands are one with the land that has grown world-class produce and our country's largest fruit exports. So I tell them, if I can do it, you can do it because the good news is ***mahal tayo ng Diyos, mayaman talaga ang Pilipinas at ang galing galing talaga ng Pinoy!***" he said.

A firm proponent of the total systems approach in strategic management, he has gone to almost every province since December translating his seeds-to-shelf philosophy into layman's tongue and launching actual projects espousing the innovative approach. "I'm definitely market-driven, but I didn't realize it will improve my Tagalog and Bisaya! Soon, I may start at dashes of Ilocano and Bicolano too, you know", the Secretary jokes.

Lorenzo said agriculturists and businessmen call it concept-to-consumer or farm-to-plate, but applying total systems simply entails plotting a roadmap studying and improving every step of the food chain from research to planting to growing to harvesting to packing to logistics to marketing and finally distribution.

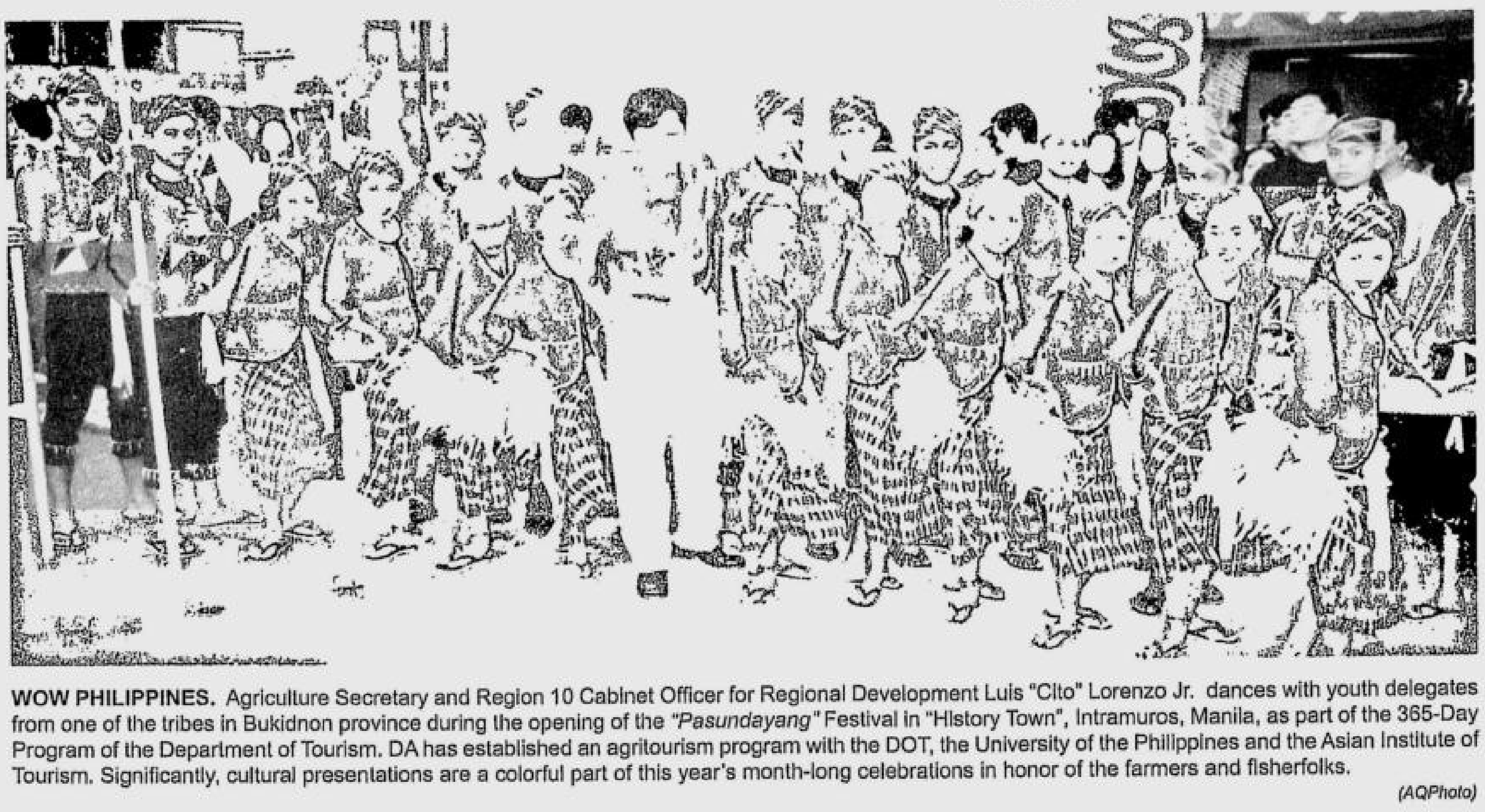
The 45 year-old Secretary explained that total systems planning identifies markets for the commodities and enterprise movers, locates suitable production areas, determines competitiveness attributes and jobs created, and identifies implementation bottlenecks and needed government assistance. Most importantly, it outlines specific, measurable, accountable, reasonable and timebound (SMART) guidelines and directions towards the attainment of departmental targets.

Today, the agri chief presents to the Filipino people his roadmaps for 13 key commodities, as he declares open the nationwide celebration of the farmers and fisherfolk month.

The roadmaps are now available to the public in leaflets covering rice, corn and livestock, fisheries and aquaculture especially tilapia, bangus and seaweeds; coconut, sugar, coffee, vegetables and even tropical fruits like, banana, mango, papaya, calamansi, and even durian.

Secretary Lorenzo says he has never seen a bureaucracy so potent in helping our country turn around the economy. "At DA, we have our nation's and the world's brightest stars developing meaningful programs that in partnership with our brawny-blessed and industrious farmers and fisherfolk, can produce the harvest that will turn around our country from cyclical consumption and imports to a future of sufficiency and exports."

When asked for a timeline, barring natural and climactic threats, the agriculture secretary fearlessly predicts near-sufficiency levels in a year and modest but sustainable export capabilities by 2005.



WOW PHILIPPINES. Agriculture Secretary and Region 10 Cabinet Officer for Regional Development Luis "Cito" Lorenzo Jr. dances with youth delegates from one of the tribes in Bukidnon province during the opening of the *"Pasundayang"* Festival in "History Town", Intramuros, Manila, as part of the 365-Day Program of the Department of Tourism. DA has established an agritourism program with the DOT, the University of the Philippines and the Asian Institute of Tourism. Significantly, cultural presentations are a colorful part of this year's month-long celebrations in honor of the farmers and fisherfolks.

(AQPhoto)

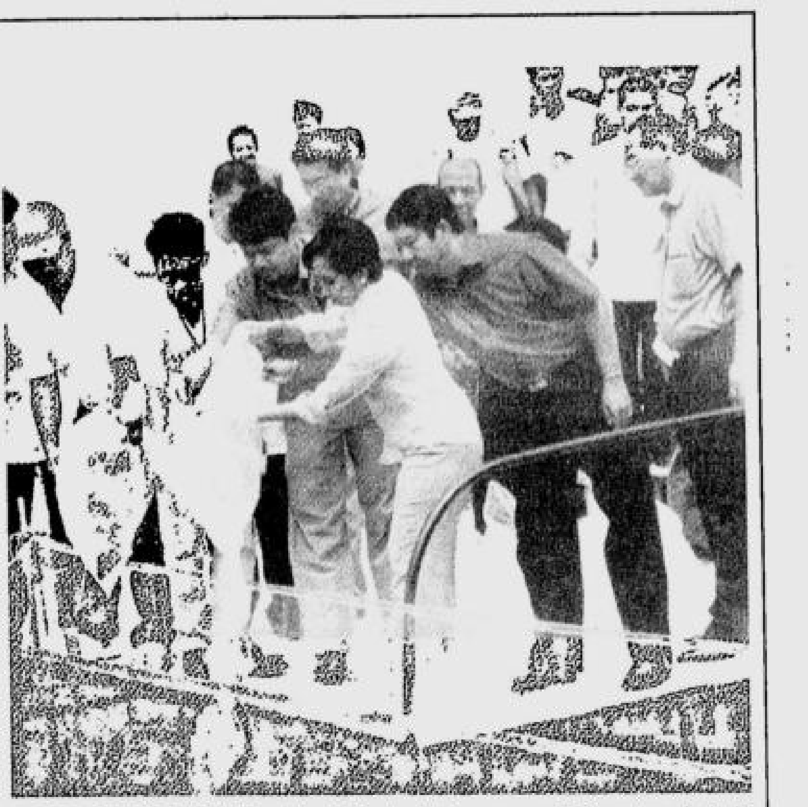
ADVT.

CALENDAR OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

SKED	ACTIVITIES	AGENCY
13	Farmer's Class for Rice Culture Pest & Diseases Control	NIA Regio 10
	IA Office, Tagilo, SND, Lanao del Norte	
	Mal-i FIA Inc General Assembly Meeting	
	Mal-i Brgy Hall, Mal-i, Claveria, Misamis Oriental	
	Mal-i CABEIA Inc BOD Meeting	
	DUBCLATAFFIA Inc. Dumarani Sectorial Meeting	
	DUMUFCO Hall, Badiangon, Molugan, El Salvador	
	MACKAPIMA IA General Assembly	
	Magsaysay, Maramag, Bukidnon	
	Market sa DA, DA RFU 1 Compound	Region 1
	Seminar & Film showing on Swine Production & Management	Region 11
	And Basic Feed Formulation, FITS Center	
13-14	Training on Value Added / Boneless Bangus, Tigbauan, Iloilo	BFAR RFU-6
	Workshop on the Unification of Municipal Fisheries Ordinance	BFAR CARAGA
	in Lake Mainit Area, Mainit, Surigao del Norte	
13-15	Training on rban Gardening, BPI Crop Research Div	BPI
13-16	FYDP / 4H Club National Achievement Week	ATI
	Barcelo Sarabia Manor House Hotel & Convention	
	Center, Iloilo City	
14	Training on Backyard Aquaculture	BFAR RF-6
	Launching / Blessing of Provincial Fish Nursery	BFAR CARAGA
	Panit-an / Maayon / Roxas City / Panay, Capiz	
	Prov'l Fish Nursery, Gamut, Tago, Surigao del Norte	
	Conduct Trainings / Workshop on Citrus	
	Malabing, Kasibu, Nueva Viscaya	Region 2
	Preconstruction Conference for Magsaysay CIS Rehab	NIA Region 10
	Project / KATALISAYAN General Assembly Meeting	
	Magsaysay, Maramag, Bukidnon	
	Seminar and Film Showing on Poultry Production and	Region 11
	Management and Basic Feed Formulation, FITS Center	
	Farmers Classes for Corn Production	CARAGA
	Marihatag, Surigao del Sur	
14 - 15	Tilapia Fingerling Dispersal to Communal Bodies of Water	BFAR RFU-5
	San Andres, San Miguel and Danicop, Catanduanes	
	Advance Training for Meat Processors	Region 8
	ATI-NTC, LSU (Visca), Baybay, Leyte	
14-16	Corn Techno Demo Showcase	
	Bgy. Irawan, Puerto Princesa City / Baongan, Palawan	
	Espanola, Palawan	
	Monitoring & Evaluation of Local Level Plan	Region 4
	Implementation on Nutrition, OPA, Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro	
	Production Services Delivery Course on Natural Farming	ATI, Region 7
	Systems	
14-21	Crab Festival, Buguey, Cagayan	BFAR RFU-2
	Booth and Photo Exhibit	
	Tealrong Dagat Preformance	
	Aquaculture Seminars	
	Fish Processing Demo	
15	Conduct trainings / Workshop on Meat Processing & Product	Region 2
	Ilagan, Isabela	
	Training on Vermiculture and Composting, BPI Crop Research Div	BPI
	Hands-on "Trichogramma Production and Utilization"	
	BPI Crop Protection Div	
	Training on Backyard Aquaculture	BFAR RFU-6
	San Jose / Sibalon / Belson, Antique / Pres. Roxas	
	Pilar, Capiz / Guinbal, Iloilo	
	Partial Harvest (Rice Fish)	BFAR CARAGA
	Tagapua, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur	
	Project turn-over Ceremony for Labo CIS, Labo CIS, OsamisCity	NIA Region 10
	Labigan General Assembly Meeting	
	BOD meeting for Lanao del Norte Federation of Irrigators	
	Association, Marandang RIS, Lala, Lanao del Norte	
	Women's Day / Family Farm Congress1	Region 1
	Techno Demo on Meat Processsing and Tubular Polyethylene	FITS, Region 11
	Digester (TPED)	
	Hybrid Seeds Growers Meeting, New Ilocos, Magsaysay, Davao del Sur	
	Inaguration of Farmers Training Center, Carmen, Surigao del Sur	CARAGA
15 - 16	Tilapia Festival, Paskuhan Village, San Fernando, Pampanga	Region 3
	Deputation of Fish Warden, Botolan, Zambales	BFAR RFU-3
	Tilapia Congress, Paskuhan Village, San Fernando, Pampanga	
	Information Dissemination of Seaweed Production	BFAR RFU-9
	Badjao MP Center, Caragasan, Zamboanga City	
	Fish Processing Demo, San Agustin, Surigao Sur	BFAR CARAGA
	Extration, Operation and Maintainance of Mobile Stripping	Region 10
	Machine to members of Agoho MPC, Mambajao, Camiguin	
15 - 18	Farmers and Fisherfolks Month Celebration	Region 1
	FTC Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan	
15 - 24	Agro Industrial Festival, Lasam, Cagayan	BFAR RFU-2
	Booth and Photo Exhibit	
	Techno Clinic on Fishpond, Fish cage & Rice fish culture	
	Special events - Tilapia Cooking Contest, Tilapia Sexing	
	Contest, Fish Relay Contest, Hulaan Mo Contest	
16	Fish Farmers Federation Meeting, BSF-Buguey, Cagayan	BFAR RFU-2
	Farm Business Stakeholders Meeting, Negros Oriental	CODA
	Kahugpungan General Assembly	NIA Region 10
	Rice Progam Day	Region 1
	Success Stories	
	Native Rice Contest	
	Launching of Tulong Kabuhayan sa	BFAR RFU 4
	Kababaihang Mangingisda (TKKM), Rizal	
	MOA Signing with PFDA on the Use of	
	One Stall for a Livelihood Proj. under TKKM, Rizal	
	Common Carp Dispersal, Rizal	
17	Corn and Livestock Day	Region 1
	Native Pig Rodeo	
	Grains Center (FLGC) Kimaya FIA, Inc. General Assembly Mtg	Region 10
	Kili-kili, Wao, Lanao del Sur & Jasaan, Misamis Oriental	
	Coconut Replanting	
3rd week	PHILNAP Organization,Cagayan de Oro City	BFAR RFU -10
	Inaguration of the Retort Facility at the Magalos Dairy Plant	NDA
	Magalos, Baguio District, Davao City	
	Training of Fish Warden, Bislig City	CARAGA
	Fingerlings Dispersal in Communal bodies of water &	
	Backyard Fishpond Operators, Agusan del Sur	
18	Kimaya FIA, Inc. General Assembly Meeting	NIA Region 10
	Kimaya Brgy Hall, Kimaya Jasaan, Misamis Oriental	
	Fisherfolk Day & Mango Festival / Congress	Region 1
	Product Parade - Tilapia	
19	Stocking of Technology Demostration Farms on	BFAR RFU-2
	Fishpond (Tilapia, Aglipay, Quirino)	
	Coral Reef Symposium, Region wide	BFAR RFU-5
	Cooking Demo on Fish Donut and Seaweeds Salad, Regional Office	
	Training on Backyard Aquaculture	BFAR RFU-6
	Bugasong / Patnongon / Barbaza, Antique / EB Magalona	
	Victorias City / Murcia, Negros Occ.	
	Coastal Clean-up and Mangrove Planting	BFAR CARAGA
	Fisherfolk Day (LGU, NGO, BFAR), Agusan del Norte	
	Outreach Program for the Sugar Industry	SRA
	Cagayan Planters Day, Carsumco, Cagayan	
	Paitan General Assembly Meeting, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon	NIA Region 10
	Farmers Meeting,Dayawan, Villanueva, Misamis Oriental	Region 10
	Farmers Field Trip to Adjacent Areas, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon	
19-21	Deputation of Fish Warden Training, Bislig, Surigao del Sur	BFAR CARAGA
	Rabies IEC and Vaccination Campaign, Dulang, Leyte	Region 8
19 - 23	National Agri-Aqua & Machinery Fair - Cluster III	
	Visayas - Regions 6, 7 & 8, DA Compound, Central Office	
	Rural Improvement Club-Home Economics Extension	ATI
	Association of the Philippines(RIC-HEEAP) Seminar	
	Worshop on Agro-Ecotourism Development	
	Bohol Tropics Hotel, Tagbilaran City	
	Seminar Workshop on Fruit and Vegetable Preservation	BPI
	BPI Laboratory Services Div	
	Fisheries Law Enforcement Training, Punta Villa, Iloilo City	BFAR RFU 6
	Provincial Agri-Aqua Trade Fair, Tarlac City	Region 3
	Awarding of Regional Gawad Saka Winners, Batangas	BFAR RFU 4
	Awarding of GET EXCEL Tilapia	
	Hatchery Certificates	
	Awarding of Dissolved Oxygen Meters to the	
	municipalities of Agoncillo, Cuenca, Laurel,	
	Mataas na Kahoy, San Nicolas, Talisay and Lipa City	
	Launching of the Tilapia Mechanical Dryer	
	Distribution of Livelihood Paraphernalia, Batangas & Cavite	
	Awarding of Certificate of Recognition to	
	Gov. Hermilando Mandana	
	MOA Signing with Tanauan School of Fisheries	
	on Aquarium Fish Growing	
	Launching of Extension Bulletin	
	Oath Taking of Officers of Samahan ng	
	Kababaihan Livelihood Project, Ambulong, Tanauan City	
	Launching of Coastal Clean-up, Agoncillo, Laurel, Talisay, San Nicolas	
	Monitoring & Evaluation of Local Level Plan	Region 4
	Implementation on Nutrition, Socorro, Mindoro Oriental	
	GAD for Seedgrowers (Leadership & Valur Formation)	Region 8
	Alangalang, Leyte	
19-30	Establishment of Artificial Reefs, Buguey, Cagayan	BFAR RFU-2
	Establishemnt of Payao, Ballesteros, Cagayan	
	Adopt a Coastline , Gonzaga, Cagayan	
	Farmer's Field Trip to Adjacent Areas within Pulangui RIS &	
	Valencia City, Malaybalay City and Lantapan, Bukidnon	NIA Region 10
	Pulangui RIS and Manupali RIS Farmers Mtg	
	Valenia City & Lantapan, Bukidnon	Region 10
20	Market sa DA, DA RFU-1 Compund	Region 1
	Learning Session on the Management of Urban Rats	BPI
	BPI Crop Protection Div	
	Stocking of Technology Demonstration Farms on Fishpond	BFAR RFU-2
	Demo (Carp), Aglipay, Quirino; Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya	
	Stocking of Technology Demostration Farms on Rice-Fish Culture	BFAR RFU-2
	Diffun, Quirino; Sta. Ana, Cagayan; Solano, Nueva Viscaya	
	Training on Aquaculture & Post Harvest Technology, Tarlac	BFAR RFU-3
	Provincial Fisherfolk FARMC Assembly, Albay	BFAR RFU-5
	Tilapia Fingerling Dispersal to Communal Bodies of Water	BFAR RFU-5
	Minalabac & Camaligan, Camarines Sur, Mobo, Masbate	
	Training on Backyard Aquaculture	BFAR RFU-6
	Isabela / La Castelana / Kabankalan City / Cauayan, Negros Occ	
	Launching of Milk Feeding Programs	NDA
	Trece Martinez, Cavite / Bacacay, Albay, Sto. Domingo, Albay	
	Cleaning of Fish Port, LFPC	PFDA
	National In-House Review Research and Development Proj	SRA
	SRA Larec Floridablanca, Pampanga	
	Preconstruction Conference for Capinonan CIS Rehab Proj	NIA Region 10
	Capinonan, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon	
	System Management Seminar for Balagtasa-Segapod	
	Balagtasa, Maigo, Lanao del Norte	
	SAS General Assembly Meeting	
	Launching of Stripping Shed and Training Center	Region 10
	Lantapan, Bukidnon	
	FFS Vegetables, El Salvador, Misamis Or	
	Farmers Consultutation on Direct Copra Making	
	Rogongon, Iligan City	
	Pre-construction Conference for Capinonan, Poblacion, Mahinog	
	CIS Rehab Project System Management, Camiguin	
	Seminar for Calagtasa - Segapod CIS, SAS General Assembly /	
	Maigo, Lanao del Norte	
	Farmers Meeting	
20 - 21	Anti-Rabies Vaccination, Boac, Marinduque	Region 4
20-23	Training on Mushroom Culture and Cultivation	BPI
	BPI Crop Research Div	
	Distribution of Vegetable Seeds for Planting in time for	Region 4
	Nutrition Month, San Jose, Mindoro Occidental	
	Animal Health Services - Free Clinics, FITS Center	Region 11
21	Fisherfolk/Fishfarmers' Month of the Ocean	BFAR RFU 4
	Tanauan School of Fisheries, Ambulong, Tanauan City	
	Common Carp Launching, Talisay, Batangas	
	Launching of Tilapia Mechanical Dryer, Talisay, Batangas	
	MOA Signing between DA-BFAR & Tanauan School of Fisheries	
	on Aquarium Fish Growing, Ambulong, Tanauan City	
	Sharing of Success Stories, Ambulong, Tanauan City	
	Regional Training Asia Pacific Meat Processing Technology	BAI
	Coastal Clean-up, Pasacao, C.S.	BFAR RFU-5
	Tilapia Fingerling Dispersal to Communal Bodies of Water	
	Bato and Bula, Camarines Sur	
	Training on Backyard Aquaculture	BFAR RFU-6
	Tobias Fornier / Anini-y / Hamtic, Antique / Sipalay City, Negros Occ	
	Cotton Research and Development Review	CODA
	Cotton Research Center, Batac, Ilocos Norte	
	Tree Planting	PFDA
	Planters Dialogue with SRA Administrator James Ledesma	SRA
	Pintira General Assembly Meeting, Valencia, Bukidnon	NIA Region 10
	Localization of Unified Artificial Insemination Program for	Region 8
	Large Ruminants / AI Services, Catarman, N. Samar	
	FFS Techno Demo on Hybrid Rice, Claveria, Misamis Or	Region 10
	SCFO Federation Meeting, Compol, Catarman, Camiguin	
	Rodeo and Dog Show, Surigao del Sur	Caraga
21 - 22	Mango Production Training, Baybay, Leyte	Region 8
21-23	Skills Training on Value Added Fish Processing	BFAR CARAGA
	Lapaz, Agusan del Sur	
	Production Services Delivery Course on Natural Farming Systems	ATI, Region 7
22	Compost Making, BPI Crop Protection Div	BPI
	Agri Clinic, Bayawan City	Region 7
	Stocking of Technology Demonstration Farms on Rice Ulang	BFAR RFU-2
	Cabarroguis, Quirino; Tamauni & Sta Maria Isabel;	
	Sta Praxede & Abulug, Cagayan; Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya	
	Stocking of Technology Demonstration Farm on Fish Cage	
	Villa Verde, Nueve Vizcaya; Nagtipunan, Quirino	
	Symposium on White Spot Syndrome Virus, Sorsogon	BFAR RFU-5
	Tilapia Fingerling Dispersal to Communal Bodies of Water	
	San Jose and Sipocit Camarines Sur, Aroroy, Masbate	
	R&D Review Caravan & Zonal Center, Cagayan de Oro	BFAR RFU-10
	RRA for the Implementation of Pigok Program	
	Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental / Mahinog, Camiguin	
	Project turn over Ceremony for Casoy CIS	NIA Region 10
	Casoy CIS, Sinacaban, Misamis Occidental	
	FARMC Congress, Butuan City	BFAR CARAGA
	NMFDC General Assembly and Sports Festival	Region 10
	Marvilla, Opol, Misamis Oriental	
	Compact Farm FFS (Pest Monitoring), Nabag-o, Valencia City, Bukidnon	
22-23	Training on Value-adding / Boneless Bangus, Makato, Aklan	BFAR RFU-6
23	Establishment of Adopt a Barangay Project	BFAR RFU-2
	Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya; Nagtipunan, Quirino	
	Tilapia Fingerling Dispersal to Communal Bodies of Water	BFAR RFU-5
	Uson, Masbate	
	Off Season Mango Production, Tagloan, Misamis Oriental	Region 10
24	SSVIA General Assembly Meeting, Gingoog City	NIA-Region 10
4th Week	Fisherfolk Congress, Gingoong Bay Area	BFAR RFU-10
	Tilapia Fingerling Dispersal , Bislig City	CARAGA
	Enterprenurial Skills Development Program, Agusan del Sur	
25	Tilapia Fingerlings Dispersal to Communal Bodies of Water	BFAR RFU-5
	Bulan & Casiguran Sorsogon	
	Launching of Milk Feeding Program, San Lorenzo, Nueva Ecija	
	HACCP Training for Port Clients, Naga City, DA Regional Office	PFDA
	Fishing Boat Operators / Supplierd	
	Alubijid-Loguilo ISA Inc., General Assembly Meeting	NIA Region 10
	IA Hall, Brgy Loguilo, Laubijid, Misamis Oriental	
26	Financial Management Seminar for Mapurog CIS	NIA Region 10
	Oligdigan, Salvador, Lanao del Norte	
	Patag-Corona General Assembly Meeting	
	SMC / Coordination Meeting	
	NIA-MARIS Office, Maranding, Lala, Lanao del Norte	
	Coconut Replanting, Hinaplanan, Claveria, Misamis Oriental	Region 10
	Financial Management Seminar for Mapurog	
	Tilapia Congress & Culmination Activity of Farmers' and	BFAR CARAGA
	Fisherfolks' Month, Patin-ay, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur	
26-28	Deputation of Fish Warden Training, Marihatag, Surigao del Sur	BFAR CARAGA
26-29	Fingerlings Dispersal to the various Inland Water of Surigao	BFAR CARAGA
	City and Surigao del Norte, Surigao City & Surigao del Norte	
	Farmers' National Convention, Grand Hotel, Cebu City	Region 7
26-30	Agri-Aqua Fair & Agri-Machinery Fair - Cluster IV	DA Central Office
	Mindanao Cluster - Regions 9, 10, 11, 12 13, ARMM	
	Lecture Demo on Plant Nursery Establishment	BPI
	and Management and VegetableProduction	
	BPI Crop Production Div	
	BPRE 25th Founding Anniversary, BPRE, Science City of Munoz	BPRE
	Post Harvest Loss Prevention Week	
	International Post Harvest & Agri Machinery Expo 2003	
	Monitoring & Evaluation of Local Level Plan, Romblon, Romblon	Region 4
	Implementation on Nutrition,SMC Coordination Meeting	
	Maranding, Lala, Lanao del Norte	Region 10
	Fisherfolk Congress, Gingoog Bay Area	
	Field Day of On-Farm Researches on Corn, Monkayo, Comval	Region 11
	Distribution of Handheld Radio & Global	BFAR RFU 4
	Positioning System to FRMP Municipalities, Quezon	
	Adoption of the Unified Fisheries Ordinance, Tayabas Bay	
	Consultation on the Operation of Hulbot-hulbot	
	Fisherfolk Summit	
	Distribution of Livelihood Paraphernalia	
	Coastal Clean-up, FRMP Bays	
	Awarding of Check to Binonoan Development	
	Coop. of Infanta for the Aquasilviculture Proj.	
27	VEP IA General Assembly Mtg. Camiguin	NIA Region 10
	MACABASAKPA IA BOD Meeting	
	IA Office, Kapatagan, Pob., Lala, Lanao del Norte	
	Hands-on "Trichogramma Production and Utilization"	BPI
	BPI Crop Protection Div	
	Symposium on White Spot Syndrome Virus, Camarines Norte	BFAR RFU-5
	Farmers Meeting, MalaybalayCity	Region 10
	FFS Vegetables, El Salvador, Misamis Or	
	Farmers training on coco nursery management, Compol, Catarman	
	Hybrid Seed Growers Meeting, DAMSEPCO, Tagum City	Region 11
27 - 28	Info Caravan, Boljoon & Santander, Cebu	Region 7
	Training on Smoked fish production technology	BFAR RFU-2
	Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya	
	Distribution of Vegetable Seeds for Planting In	
	In time for Nutrition Month, Boac, Marinduque Region 4	
	Mango Production Training, Matalon, Leyte	Region 8
	Farmer's Field Day on Hybrid Rice, Ormoc City,	
	and Biliran, Biliran, Cebu Grand Hotel, N. Escario St.	
	Cebu City	
27 - 30	Orientation of the DA Programs Corn National Convention	ATI
	of Pambansang Mannoon-Mag-uuma-Magbabaul-Magsasaka	
	ng Pilipinas (P4MP) Federation of Farmers Association, Cebu	
	Grand Hotel, N. Escarion St., Cebu City	

Continuation of the schedule of events will be published in the May 17 Manila Bulletin. For more details regarding the Farmers and Fisherfolk Month, call (032) 928-8741 to 65 Local 216 or (032) 926-8444 & (032) 920-1750 . About the Agri-Aqua & Agri Machinery Fair call (032) 928-8741 to 65 Local 123 or 131, or (032) 925-3795. Or log on to www.da.gov.ph. **Special acknowledgments go to the DA Agribusiness & Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) and the Livelihood Corporation.**

Agriculture & Fisheries Information Service



POOR MAN'S FISH. President Gloria M. Arroyo and Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. disperses GET-Excel tilapia fingerlings at the National Freshwater Fisheries Technology Center in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, launching the President's program to provide a cheap source of fish protein. Assisting are Undersecretary Cesar Drilon, Nueva Ecija Governor Tomas Joson and Malcolm Sarmiento Jr., BFAR director.

BOUNTIFUL HARVEST. Ka Cito tries a mechanical harvester for hybrid rice (PSB RC-72) in a 300-hectare farm in San Miguel, Lubao, Pampanga, assisted by a farmer-graduate from the Farmers' Field School organized by DA-Region III and the municipal government of Lubao.

NO SOIL URBAN AGRI. The agriculture secretary explains to Dennis Araullo, DA Region 4 executive director; Almario Francisco, barangay chairman and Honor Afable, urban farm engineer, on hydrophonic vegetable production during his visit to San Agustin, Novaliches QC.

SEC. LUIS P. LORENZO
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
MAG ... AY ... KAYO

EXPORT PROMO. Agriculture Secretary and Livelihood Corporation (Livecor) chair Luis P. Lorenzo, Jr. and Antique Gov. Sally Zaldivar Perez inks an MOA exploring international marketing possibilities for muscovado, with San Jose mayor Fernando Corvera and Livecor administrator Bernardo Mitra.

NUATICAL HIGHWAY. Secretary Lorenzo and Aklan Gov. Joeben Miraflores welcomes farmer Tembong and his companion who pioneered a RORO ride from Roxas, Oriental Mindoro with baskets of his calamansi harvest to explore selling them in Caticlan, Malay, Aklan.

ADVANCE AQUACULTURE LABORATORY
the Philippine
HON. LUIS P. LO
SEAFDEC/AQD TIGBAUAN ILO

LAB TO FARMS. Eiji Ueno, first secretary of the Embassy of Japan turnsover to the Philippine government through Secretary Lorenzo, the P431M state of the art biotech laboratory JICA donated SEAFDEC in Tigbauan, Iloilo.

ADVT.

Gov't-MILF talks on edge

From page A1

as the Jemaah Islamiya or the al-Qaida, or unequivocally reject them."

Ms Macapagal issued her sternest warning a day after her chief of staff, Secretary Rigoberto Tiglao, said declaring the MILF a terrorist organization had become "inevitable" following the recent spate of bombing and attacks on civilian communities.

Ms Macapagal again pledged to "hunt down the bombers of Koronadal and step up our punitive actions against terrorist bands victimizing innocent communities."

But she said the government would continue to "hold the option of peace talks open."

The government earlier canceled scheduled exploratory meetings in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, last weekend after the MILF attacked Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, on May 4.

Declare it

In Congress, Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay said the government should no longer hesitate to declare the MILF a terrorist group, even as he called on the administration to cancel peace negotiations once and for all.

Pichay, chair of the House committee on national defense, said the MILF attacks on civilians and bombing of the Davao International Airport, the Sasa Wharf in Davao City, in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, and Koronadal in South Cotabato were sufficient grounds for doing so.

Pichay said labeling the MILF a terrorist group would stop the flow of foreign funds to the group and enable the government to launch a sustained offensive against the secessionist group.

The terror tag would give the country cover to ask foreign governments to freeze the assets and cut off foreign funding sources of the MILF, in keeping with international accords against global terrorism.

PRESIDENT Macapagal consoles Leonides Cardenas, mother of SPO2 Esperidion Cardenas, one of eight policemen killed by Moro rebels who attacked Siocon town in Zamboanga del Norte on May 4. The President visited Siocon yesterday. PCPO-MALACAÑANG

At the same time, Pichay said he was willing to talk to MILF leader Salamat Hashim to save the peace process, provided the group stops its attacks.

House Deputy Minority Leader Rolex Suplico said the government should no longer entertain the MILF's delaying tactics and launch an all-out offensive against it.

Suplico and Zamboanga Rep. Celso Lobregat last week exposed documents that showed the MILF tried to insert provisions to return the MILF camps and lift the warrants of arrest against the MILF leaders and members in a negotiating document signed in Malaysia.

In the Senate, opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara urged Malacañang to appoint a new government peace negotiator for Mindanao, as he noted that the situation there was "getting out of hand."

"I think that the administration must, first of all, appoint now a new peace negotiator because it is important that the negotiations must be brought again to the negotiating table," Angara told reporters.

Angara said he preferred that the government get "fresh faces who can come up with fresh initiatives" like inviting a foreigner who is well-known for diplomacy and for peace making.

Ople's plan

Ople announced his proposal following a briefing with members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference's Committee of Eight.

"If after 60 days they (the MILF rebels) still continue acts of violence, they will have undermined and sabotaged the peace process giving the government all the leeway to stop all atrocities against civilians," Ople said.

He told the ambassadors and other diplomatic representatives of the committee's member-nations of the atrocities committed by the MILF against civilian communities in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, and Koronadal, South Cotabato.

The committee is composed of eight countries tasked by the OIC to oversee the implementation of the government's peace pact with the MILF. "Since they exercised moral suasion on our Muslim brothers, I asked them to encourage the MILF to be more law-abiding," Ople said.

Following the MILF attacks, the military has been ordered to launch "punitive" actions against the rebels, while the foreign department will document alleged MILF "terrorism" to present to the OIC, in an attempt to isolate the rebels.

The OIC, particularly member-countries Malaysia and Indonesia, have fostered peace talks between the Philippines and the MILF and some MILF leaders had reportedly been sheltered in OIC member-countries in the past.

"We will not allow the MILF to continue fooling the Islamic world (that) it is an insurgent organization with legitimate aims. It is engaged in the murder of innocent civilians," Macapagal said.

In a telling sign, Jesus Dureza, the chief government peace negotiator with the MILF, resigned from his position last week, saying the peace talks were "floundering." The presidential palace said it was in no rush to appoint a replacement.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, denied that the rebels were behind a series of bombings of Christian cities in Mindanao, but acknowledged that they have stepped up attacks in recent months.

He insisted the attacks were aimed at military outposts and that civilians were accidentally hit in the crossfire.

Kabalu dismissed the government's different take, saying "there is nothing new, the war has been going on" for months.

He charged that Manila had been looking for an excuse to halt the talks all along. *With reports from Juliet Javellana, Christine Avendaño; AFP*

GMA tells Siocon folk to stand up to terrorists

By Julie S. Alipala and Lullie Micabalo
PDI Mindanao Bureau

SIOCON, Zamboanga del Norte—She came to rally the residents of this shell-shocked town, but as soon as she stepped off the helicopter, President Macapagal-Arroyo was welcomed like showbiz royalty.

It was almost like last week's MILF raid had not happened at all. The attack by Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels on the town center had killed 35 people and wounded several others.

"She's cute and beautiful," gushed Adelita Goteb, 45.

Rey Dangos, a 25-year-old ice cream vendor, said the President was "even more beautiful in person." Dangos, who was able to shake hands with her, said the President had "soft hands."

Residents, holding placards hailing Ms Macapagal as "our savior and our hero," cheered the President as light rain fell on the town square.

But the President's message was anything but light.

She called on the residents to stand up to terrorism following a wave of deadly attacks in recent months that left nearly 100 people dead.

"We bleed for the victims of terrorism but there is a time for rising up again and restoring what has been destroyed," Ms Macapagal told a crowd of 4,000.

"We will not allow terrorism to stay here," she added.

Ms Macapagal is visiting Siocon and other towns and cities that fell victim to guerrilla attacks and bombings over the past two months.

The President praised town residents for not being cowed by the attacks and comforted a 9-year-old boy who lost both parents in the MILF raid.

A banner on the town hall declared: "We condemn terrorism. Justice for Siocon," as flags all flew at half-mast in memory of the dead.

Visits, assistance

After the brief meeting with government soldiers at the town's grandstand, she visited the families of civilians and policemen who were killed during the May 4 attack.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Dinky Soliman and the President extended financial assistance of P100,000 for the families of the slain policemen. The families of civilians killed received P10,000 each, while those of victims wounded received P2,000.

Eleazar Cruz, a local vegetable dealer, said she was happy to see the President.

"I just hope she will visit our public market so that it could be reconstructed immediately," Cruz said.

The rebels had burned the public market.

During a multi-sectoral meeting, Mayor Cesar Soriano asked the President to help rebuild the public market and deploy a battalion of Army troopers.

"We ask you to give us a battalion of Army (troops) to secure us, (because) threats of lawless elements lurk around," Soriano said.

The President ordered the release of P5 million for rebuilding the market as well as houses burned down during the attack. *With a report from AFP*

Military: Don't blame us for failure of intelligence

From page A1

our government," he added.

AFP Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, the military spokesperson, said much the same thing.

"There are just some things that would be rather difficult to prevent. We cannot absolutely work out a 100 percent batting average ... " he told defense reporters, adding that they have been able to thwart some attempts earlier.

"Intelligence is being talked of as a responsibility of the Armed Forces and the police. I would rather say that intelligence is the collective responsibility of everybody. We are all in this together... the local governments especially since they have their own intelligence funds which they can use for the purpose of augmenting the capability of the police and the Armed Forces," Garcia added.

Lucero said intelligence was "everybody's business," where the AFP and the PNP are "mere collectors of information."

The important part of the system, he said, are the sources of information, "sympathetic citizens who are kind enough to share information . . . about enemies of the state."

Selling charcoal

In Koronadal, the police picked up at around 8 a.m. on Sunday 32-year-old Kandidatu Gubat while he was selling charcoal at the public market.

Kandidatu is an elder brother of Edgar Aton Gubat, one of the principal suspects in a series of bomb attacks in General Santos City in 2000 and 2001.

Edgar, who was captured in November 2001, is detained at the General Santos City Jail.

Relatives of Gubat claimed that Kandidatu, a Maguindanaoan, was forcibly taken by a group of armed men believed to be members of the South Cotabato Provincial Police. They fear that Kandidatu might have been summarily executed by his abductors.

Police denied any knowledge of Kandidatu's whereabouts.

More than three hours after Gubat was snatched, police arrested Ryan Salampong, 20, a public transport driver.

Salampong was arrested after a police intelligence operative overheard him saying "The police are so dumb. They are looking all over the place, but they don't know it was me all along."

Salampong allegedly said it in Maguindanaoan, a dialect the intelligence operative understood.

During investigation at the police headquarters, Salampong presented his school identification card that showed that he was a student at Lutayan National High School.

He was arrested on Zulueta Street here at around 11:30 a.m. Sunday.

Yesterday morning, operatives of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group led by SP04 Jonathan Jovero swooped down on the residence of Alex Luntayan in Navarro Subdivision in Barangay General Paulino Santos.

The CIDG operatives were armed with a search warrant issued by a local court here. The CIDG had received information that the suspected bombers slept there the night before the bomb attack.

Residents, however, complained when the CIDG team raided the houses of 12 other Muslim residents without presenting a search warrant.

The CIDG reportedly seized a rifle grenade from the house of a certain Abe King.

Serin Ulama, one among the 12 Muslims rounded up by the CIDG raiding team, told reporters they were subjected to tactical interrogation before they were set free.

The government blamed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) for the Koronadal public market bombing.

A certain Abu Sulaiman, the alleged Abu Sayyaf leader based in Basilan, has claimed responsibility for the recent bomb attack.

The President, who was scheduled to visit Koronadal late yesterday, said her government will keep the peace option open but will hunt down the bombers of Koronadal and step up punitive actions against terrorists.

The rebels, who have been fighting for a separate Muslim homeland, denied involvement. But they say they have the right to defend themselves against a military offensive that drove them from the Buliok complex in February.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina said Sunday the bomb, fashioned from mortar, resembled devices the rebels allegedly used in two attacks in Koronadal earlier this year. A bomb in March injured three people. *With reports from and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AP*

Only US has power to stop terrorism–Lee

From page A1

stopped," the Straits Times quoted the former prime minister as telling members of the ruling People's Action Party (PAP).

"The Europeans have not got the power to control and contain the terrorists," said Lee, who is a senior minister in the government and remains an influential figure in Singapore politics.

According to Lee, the United States is now the world's pre-eminent power and the war in Iraq showed Washington "means business" when it comes to terrorism.

The message from the United States is "I mean business. I'm going to chase it wherever it comes from and stop this terrorism," the 79-year-old Lee said.

It is in Singapore's long-term interest to align itself with the United States, he said.

"We have to think long-term. We have to decide what's in our interest. We cannot allow emotions and sentiments to decide our policies," Lee said.

The Southeast Asian state, a key US ally, made its facilities available to American forces during the Iraq campaign.

Its strong relationship with the United States was further strengthened when the two countries signed a landmark free trade agreement last week. It was Washington's first such trade pact with an Asian state.

LEE KUAN YEW: The Europeans don't have the power... REUTERS

Singapore has further strengthened its links with the United States despite criticism from its Muslim neighbors, like Malaysia, regarding Washington's foreign policy, especially in the Middle East.

Even so, Southeast Asian countries have cooperated in arresting dozens of suspected members of the Jemaah Islamiyah, allegedly the regional arm of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, which has been blamed for the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States and other terrorist strikes. AFP

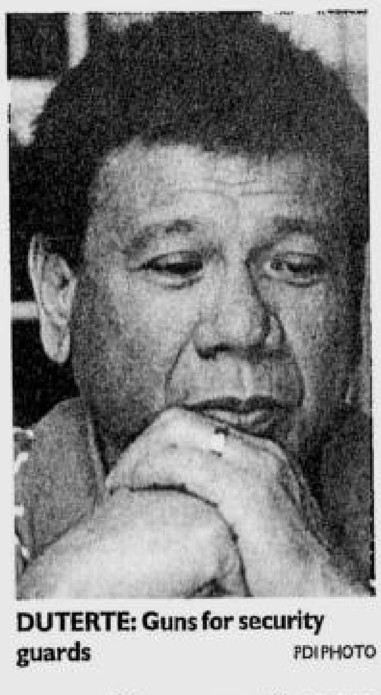
₱5.5-B rehab program in South starts in Siocon

From page A1

gram, which includes substantial implementation of the agreement that the government and the MILF signed in Tripoli, Libya, in June 2001. The agreement called for a ceasefire and political solution to the conflict.

Mindanao Natin seeks to rehabilitate Pikit, Pagalungan, Pagagawan, Carmen and President Roxas towns in North Cotabato and Damolog, Bukidnon.

It includes the fielding of Salam soldiers (Moro National Liberation Front integrees) to assist the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and other agencies implementing the antipoverty program; livelihood support through micro and small-medium enterprises credit; implementation of the rebel returnees program; establishment of one-stop action centers for land documentation and titling; distance learning program; youth and culture-sensitive program for sports, arts and entertainment; and fast-tracking of infrastructure projects.



DUTERTE: Guns for security guards PDI PHOTO

While Duterte is implementing development projects to promote peace in Mindanao, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte is arming his city.

Duterte said he wound give firearms to security guards manning government establishments and may arm barangay watchmen.

He recently told reporters that he would use part of his peace and order fund to buy firearms for the security guards.

"We need to protect government properties," he said. "We already have security guards but what we need is to arm them," Duterte said.

He said he found it strange that the police were assigned to guard government buildings when they have more pressing obligations in the streets.

He said he would push for the arming of qualified barangay watchmen "if the situation in Mindanao deteriorates."

"But only if the police and Armed Forces can't meet the challenge, then we have to arm people." *With a report from Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DUREZA: 5,000 barangays targeted PDI PHOTO

Fil-Am placed ...

From page A1

SARS in South Korea, although there has been no confirmed case. On April 29, South Korea announced its first probable case, a man who had traveled to China. He was sent home from hospital on Saturday.

For weeks, South Korea has been preparing for an outbreak of SARS that has gripped many parts of Asia. The government has said it will forcibly quarantine people suspected of having SARS.

Dayrit

Even so, Dayrit played down the probable SARS case in South Korea, saying the Filipino-American could be suffering not from SARS but from other diseases such as typical pneumonia or cancer.

"He may be sick of something else and was being brought to the US for treatment," he said.

Should the man have SARS, however, this could pose a bit of a problem for the health secretary. Elderly people afflicted with SARS are known to be "super spreaders"—they can infect as many as 10 people.

A few countries last week imposed a ban on travel to the Philippines amid confusion over a WHO classification of the country as a SARS-hit area.

In its May 10 update on the Philippines, however, the WHO said that three of the country's 10 cases were imported, while the seven other cases were "part of a chain of transmission linked to a single imported (Adela Catalon) case."

"Contacts of the 10 cases have been traced, and authorities are confident that all contacts have been identified and placed in isolation," the WHO said. "All the contacts have completed their period of observation and none has developed SARS."

The WHO considered that the cluster of SARS cases had been "well contained."

"There appears to be no increased transmission risk in the Philippines. For these reasons, the WHO does not recommend any restriction on travel to the Philippines," the UN health agency said.

After the WHO issued the clarification, the United Arab Emirates denied it would ban flights from the Philippines and stop issuing visas to overseas Filipino workers.

With reports by AFP and AP

ADB eyes loans for SARS-hit countries

THE ASIAN Development Bank (ADB) is seeking approval to provide grants and loans of up to nearly $30 million to help China, the center of the SARS epidemic, and other Asian developing economies combat the health crisis, officials said yesterday.

The Manila-based ADB board would consider providing grants of $7 million to SARS-hit developing member countries and discuss with governments the prospect of reallocating loans of around $20 million as an "emergency" move to curb the disease.

"We are carrying out rapid country assessments of our developing member countries to see how prepared they are in combating SARS, assess the immediate impact of SARS on their economies, how the countries are addressing their concerns and where the gaps are," Clay Wescott, ADB senior public administration specialist, said at a news conference.

He said China, the biggest SARS victim, was expected to receive an emergency technical assistance grant of $2 million to cope with the spread of the deadly disease in the western part of the world's most populous nation.

China's western region faced a "substantial risk due to weaknesses in local health systems' capacities for surveillance, information dissemination, prevention and treatment as well as broader constraints of financial resources and high levels of poverty," a bank statement said.

ADB president Tadao Chino has written to the governors of the bank's developing member economies hit by SARS, advising them of a multi-disciplinary task force set up by the bank to assess the impact of the disease in Asia and the Pacific, officials said.

Wescott said 22 member nations were eligible for ADB grants and loans to curb SARS and that the bank was prepared to "take shortcuts" to speed up the approval process.

The countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Cambodia, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

He said the countries would be eligible to reallocate loans totaling about $20 million to address the SARS crisis from funds that had been previously approved for other projects.

The ADB also said it was considering signing a memorandum of understanding with the World Health Organization to jointly combat SARS, which has claimed more than 500 lives worldwide and infected more than 7,000. **AFP**

PHILIPPINE Consul General Domingo Lucenario updates Filipino domestics in Hong Kong on the anti-SARS campaign Sunday. AFP

Wife decries ...

From page A1

Using an ear thermometer, the guards found his temperature to be at 37.8 degrees, two degrees short of the threshold, but prevented him from entering just the same.

The official was supposed to be arraigned for graft at the Sandiganbayan's 3rd Division at 2 p.m. His condition prompted the court to reset the proceedings.

But it was his wife who felt humiliated by the incident. Sandiganbayan clinic employees, she claimed, virtually swarmed over her husband to further check on his temperature.

"Why should their reaction be like that? They panicked and kept him out (of the building) as if he's a leper," the wife told reporters, referring to her husband who was then made to wait outside the building's main entrance.

He was given a monobloc stool—and an electric fan plugged into an extension cord to "cool" himself down. Later he was allowed just a few steps inside the lobby because his previous spot was already exposed to the searing afternoon sunlight.

His arraignment was eventually reset and the couple was allowed to go home by the court—although not because of the husband's condition.

Lily Biton, 3rd Division clerk of court, explained that the postponement was in view of his pending motion to have his case reviewed by the Office of the Ombudsman. Nevertheless, the whole experience at the lobby was traumatic enough for the couple that the wife pleaded to reporters not to print their names or address lest they be avoided like SARS sufferers in their own neighborhood upon their return home.

Her husband had also just recovered from a stroke, she said.

The incident marked the first day the Sandiganbayan implemented SARS prevention measures in its building on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

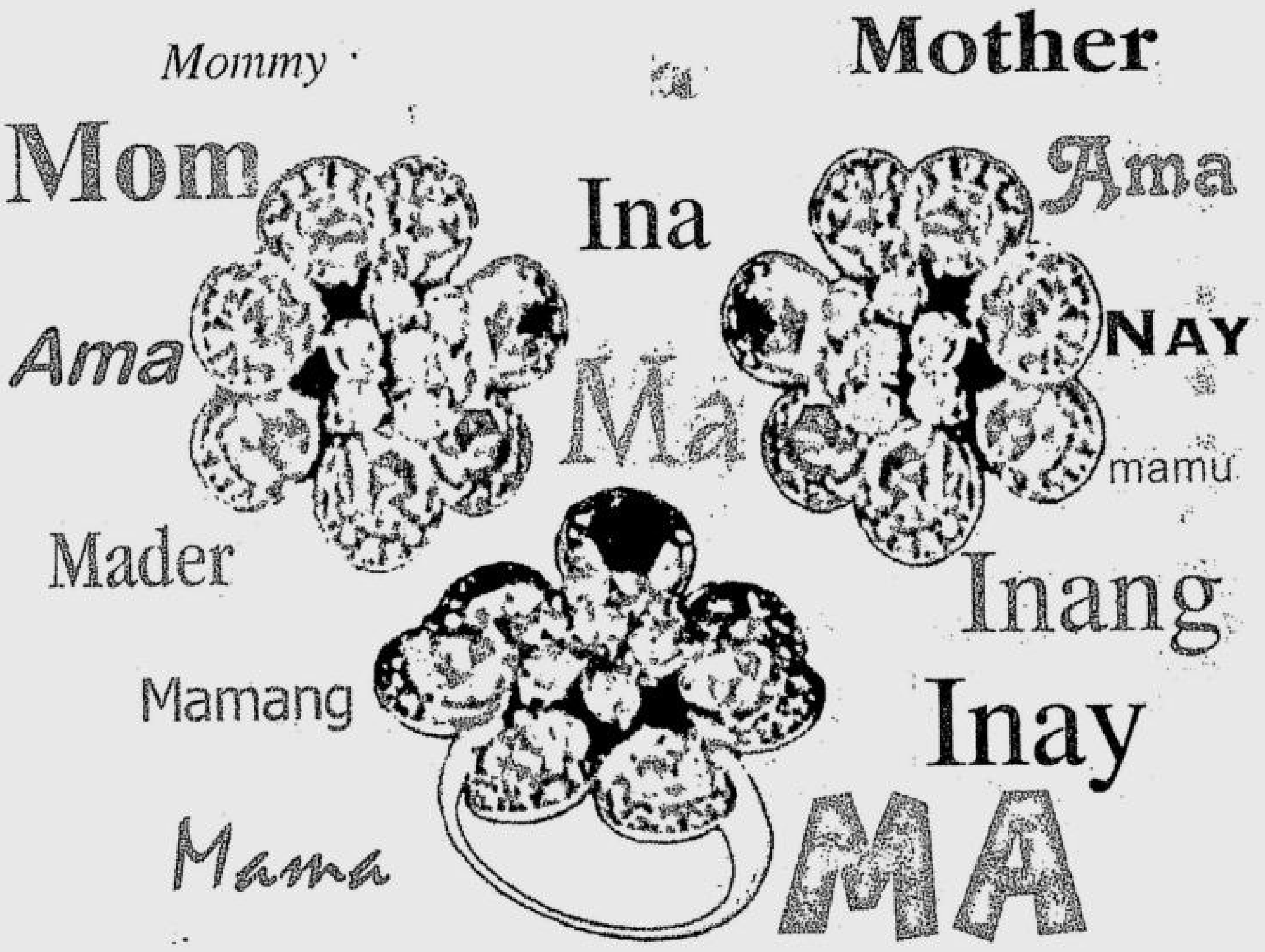
Told of the incident, court employees and officials maintained that the prevention measures were justified for everyone's protection.

Also starting today, the court's employees will be administered anti-flu and anti-pneumonia vaccines, according to a memo issued by the Executive Clerk of Court Emma Lorbes in compliance with directives from the Department of Health.

"Vaccinating against flu and pneumonia will likewise reduce the chances of contracting SARS since its manifestations are similar to those of flu and pneumonia," the memo said.

The resident physician, Isabelita Sta. Romana, said the court had also ordered 350 pieces of N95 face masks for its personnel. The 3M masks were purchased at P70 each. It used to be just P50 each, Sta. Romana noted.

The anti-flu and pneumonia vaccines, meanwhile, would cost P920 per employee, she said.



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No rush to judgment on Cha-cha

From page A1

For Sen. Joker Arroyo, the drive to amend the Constitution through a constituent assembly was getting "weaker" because of the growing number of people and groups vocally opposed to it, including the El Shaddai and Iglesia Ni Cristo, which were represented at the Senate committee hearing yesterday.

The hearing showed the "drift of the testimonies" was that "we not clutter (amendments to the Constitution) with the 2004 elections," Arroyo said.

He told reporters that "De Venecia is isolated."

At the hearing, Bienvenido Santiago of the Iglesia Ni Cristo and Mel Robles of El Shaddai reiterated their groups' opposition to moves to amend the Constitution at this time, saying the government should first focus on the country's economic and law and order problems.

Palma against Cha-cha

Outside the Senate, other groups were also voicing their opposition to Charter change.

"This is not the right time to work on making changes in the 1987 Constitution in view of the many problems confronting the nation which need immediate attention," said retired Supreme Court Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma, head of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the Constitution.

"However, inasmuch as there are sectors strongly advocating constitutional reforms, I find myself open to the idea of looking at what could be possible changes in the Charter," Palma said in a statement.

"My opinion is that what is needed is a constitutional convention to handle the proposed changes as given to us by Congress because these changes are not simple amendments but constitute a revision of particular basic provisions and philosophy of the 1987 Charter," she added.

SENATORS Ed Angara and John Osmeña at the Senate committee on constitutional amendments hearing. Is Cha-cha losing steam in the Senate? JESS YUSON

REP. Eduardo Nachura, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, attends hearing at the Senate where his forecast of a vote didn't materialize. Beside him are former UP president Jose Abueva and Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra. JESS YUSON

The head of the Kapatiran sa Pangkalahatang Kabutihan is also against Charter change and moves to convert the House and the Senate into a constituent assembly.

Kapatiran president Nandy Pacheco said "amending the Charter now is a betrayal of the common good as it will only serve the selfish, and political interests of those who are for Charter change."

"What we need today is character change, not Charter change," he said in a statement.

Drilon said his "reading" was "nothing was certain" yet on how members of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments would cast their vote.

No rush

After yesterday's hearing, committee chair Edgardo Angara said his committee would hold one or two more hearings as more resource persons had been invited to give their views on Charter change.

"There should be no rush to judgment on this issue," Angara told reporters.

Congress though has to decide whether it will go for a constituent assembly or a constitutional convention before Aug. 31 or it will be too late for it to act on such measure, he said.

Angara noted that based on what the Commission on Elections had said at the hearing, the schedule was "tight" for the holding of either an assembly or a convention.

If an assembly is adopted, it should approve the amendments on or before Feb. 9 to give time for the holding of a plebiscite simultaneously with the 2004 elections, he said.

If Con-con is adopted, Angara said candidates need to file their applications on or before Dec. 15 so that the election could be held simultaneously with the 2004 elections.

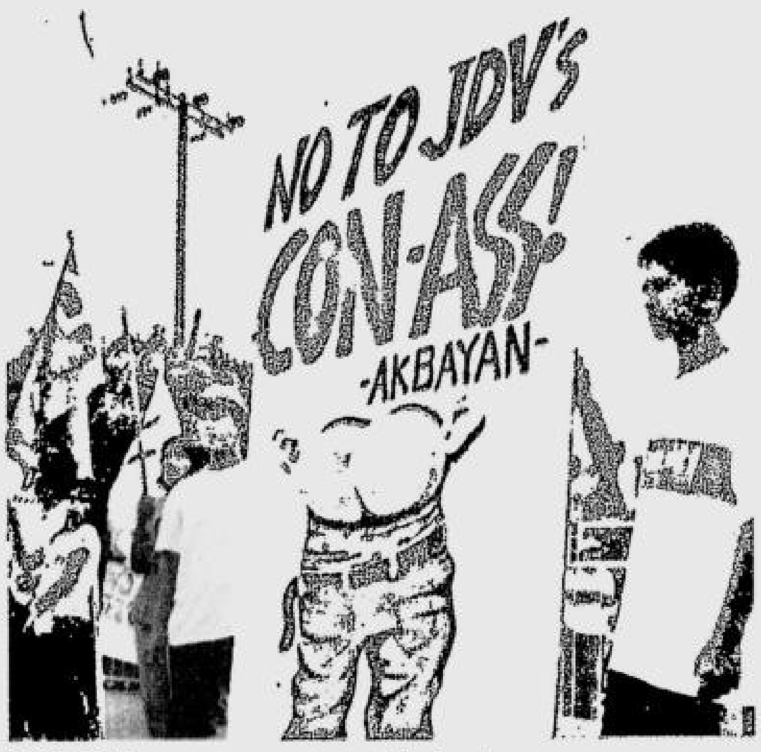
Jose Abueva, UP professor emeritus and member of the Citizens Movement for a Federal Philippines, pushed for a Con-con at the hearing, saying its cost was "negligible."

He said a constituent assembly would not have enough time to consult with people because Congress was also tasked with passing laws.

But Nachura said converting Congress into a constituent assembly would be cheaper than a constitutional convention.

Electing delegates to the Con-con will cost P2.3 billion if it is conducted separately from the 2004 elections, according to Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra.

He said electing Con-con delegates would cost P709 million if done simultaneously with the 2004 elections.


NO TO JDV's CON-ASS! -AKBAYAN-

MILITANT group stages protest at the Senate. JESS YUSON

Thai finance chief . . .

From page A1

dow for him to crawl out.

"It was pretty bad because nothing worked, everything was locked," a shaken Finance Minister Suchart Jaovisidha told reporters.

Suchart said he was on his way to give a speech to central bank officials from 17 countries when his ministry-assigned BMW car stalled on a road, not far from his house.

The engine stopped, the air conditioning shut down, the doors got locked and the windows wouldn't roll down, he said, adding that he was trapped for about 10 minutes.

"We couldn't breathe because there was no air," he said.

Suchart and his driver waved at passers-by to draw attention to their plight, but it took a while to make them understand that they wanted the windows smashed.

Finally, a guard of a nearby building came to their rescue with a sledgehammer and broke a window. Suchart then climbed out of the car through the hole.

"Even using a hammer, it took a long time to break the window because the glass proved to be very resistant," he said.

Suchart then went back home and got his personal car, also a BMW, to drive to the speech venue, where he arrived one hour late. The speech was to open a meeting to plan the setup of an Asian bond market.

Suchart said he got the official BMW car two days ago as a replacement for his regular Mercedes Benz, which had broken down. *AP*

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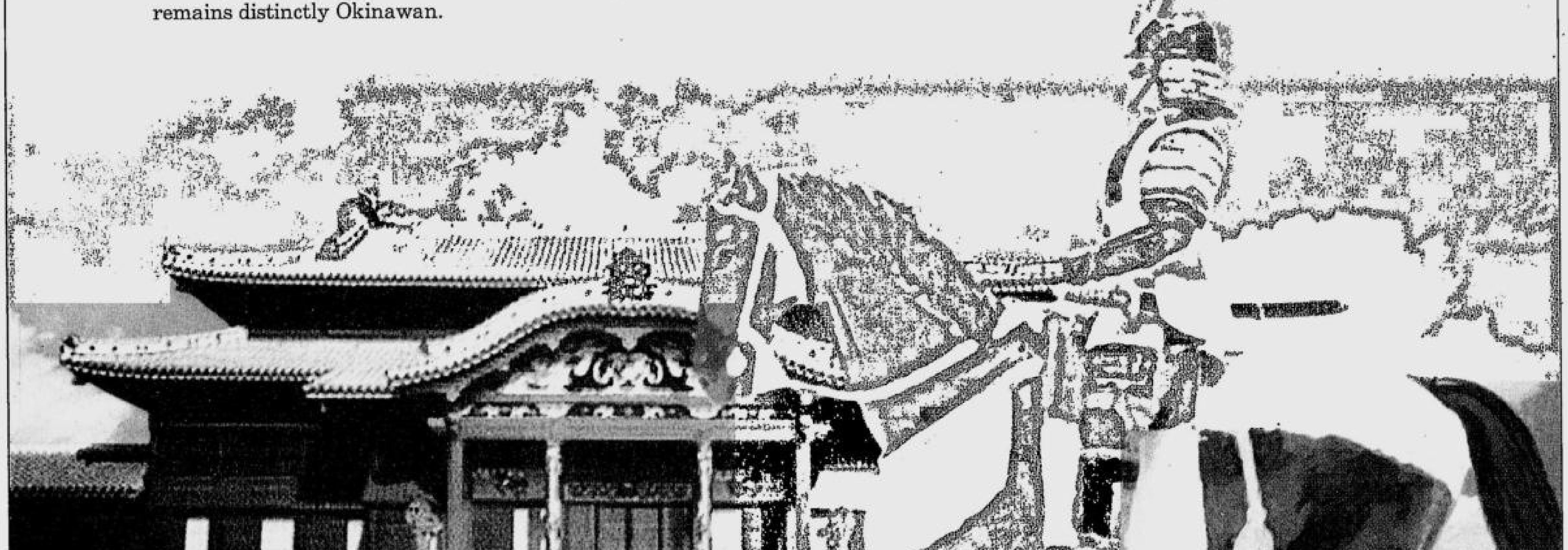

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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

CAR THEFT SUSPECT
Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte (right) presents to the media Monday Bongabon Magsino, a suspect in the theft of expensive cars in Metro Manila. Three stolen vehicles were also recovered by the Quezon City police. JOAN BONDOC

Crackdown on illegal towing firms launched

By Christian V. Esguerra

ILLEGAL towing firms will soon be hauled off the streets of the metropolis, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority warned yesterday.

Responding to a myriad of complaints, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said that unlicensed towing companies would also be charged with car theft for every vehicle they haul off.

"Illegal towing is tantamount to carnapping (sic)," he said in his weekly press conference.

Fernando said the operation of towing firms that are not registered with the MMDA is illegal.

The crackdown includes those authorized by local governments but have no license from the MMDA, he said.

Even tow trucks by the Philippine National Construction Corp., the firm that operates the North and South Luzon Tollways, should also secure permits from the MMDA, he added.

The MMDA has accredited around 50 towing companies, said Angelito Vergel de Dios, the agency's Traffic Operations Center chief.

Previous MMDA administrations left towing operations under the authority of local governments. Mayors then had sole control over the registration and conduct of towing firms in their respective areas.

Two years ago, business establishments along Edsa in Malibay, Pasay City, complained about a towing firm terrorizing their customers.

The so-called company, they said, hauled off vehicles, including those with drivers waiting inside with the engine on.

Burly men threatened to hurt motorists whenever they refused to yield their vehicles, the complainants said.

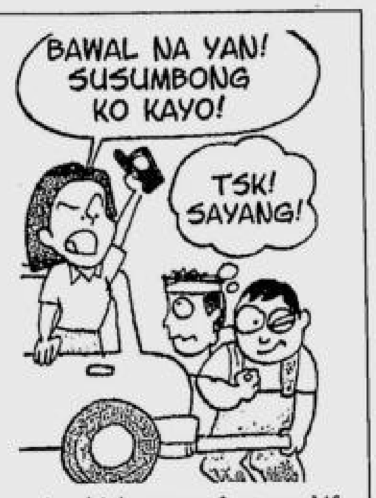
Don't just be towed away

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority has launched a set of guidelines to protect motorists from abusive towing firms.

A towing company can never haul off a vehicle without first securing clearance from the MMDA Metrobase via its 136 hotline.

The firm is required to inform the Metrobase about the vehicle's make and color, plate number, its driver's violation, towing fee, and the impounding area.

MMDA personnel are instructed to be present in any towing operation and check with the Metrobase if the company is registered with the MMDA.


BAWAL NA YAN! SUSUMBONG KO KAYO!
TSK! SAYANG!

A vehicle cannot be towed if its driver has already arrived and, more so, if the driver has been waiting inside.

Firms that will be caught violating any of the guidelines will be charged with car theft.
Christian V. Esguerra

Car theft cases down—NCRPO

By Alcuin Papa

CAR theft cases in Metro Manila this year went down by 40 percent, according to the National Capital Region Police Office.

In a statement, NCRPO chief Deputy Director Gen. Reynaldo Velasco also said an average of three vehicles were stolen daily from January to April, as compared with six vehicles stolen daily in the same period last year.

Velasco said February had the most number of stolen vehicles this year with 135.

In January, 109 cars were sto-len, 124 in March and 102 in April.

Most of the vehicles were forcibly taken from their owners at gunpoint or knifepoint. The rest were stolen while parked unattended.

Velasco attributed the decrease of the number of cars stolen to vigilance of citizens in reporting crimes to the police, increased police visibility and a crackdown on car theft syndicates.

"It may not be possible for the NCRPO to completely eradicate car theft incidents in the metropolis but what we can do is further increase police visibility in areas where car theft is rampant," he added.

Golf champ negative of powder burns

PHILIPPINE amateur golf champion Artemio Murakami and six others were found negative of powder burns in connection with his Japanese father's murder in Parañaque last week.

The paraffin tests indicated that none of them fired any of the six shots that killed Hiromasa Murakami, 58, inside his house in Better Living, said city police chief Ronald Estilles.

Also cleared were the Murakamis' helpers Merlita Villanueva, Florinda Miralles, Arnold Damian, Anthony Balani, Alberto Bacales, and Luisito Cadasio.

The victim's wife Carmelita and stepson Joel Valle were invited for questioning today at the city police headquarters, according to Estilles.

The two had initially refused a paraffin test but acceded three days later when traces of gunpowder, if they had any, shall have already been gone, police said.

Initial investigation showed that Carmelita was lying beside her husband inside the master's bedroom of their house when he was shot dead in his sleep last Wednesday.

But police were puzzled when she supposedly claimed she had seen none of the assailants.

Investigators are looking into the possibility that Murakami was killed because of inheritance. They had already ruled out robbery, love triangle, and business rift as possible motives behind the killing. *Christian V. Esguerra*

Ex-Quezon gov to surrender today

By Philip C. Tubeza

AFTER they failed to show up on Saturday, former Quezon Gov. Eduardo Rodriguez and his wife, Imelda, promised to surrender today to the National Bureau of Investigation.

Lawyer Ricardo Diaz, NBI-Interpol chief, said the couple failed to surrender on Saturday because Imelda was sick.

"She was not in good physical condition so they asked that it be postponed," Diaz said.

The couple is scheduled to surrender this morning to NBI Assistant Director Lolito Utitco. NBI Director Réynaldo Wycoco is in Vienna for a United Nations conference.

Rodriguez is wanted for alleged insurance fraud committed in the US in 1985. It was only in February 1999, however, that the US Department of Justice asked its local counterpart for help in extraditing Rodriguez.

Diaz denied reports that the couple was already arrested. "We arrested them, but that was last year. They posted bail," he said.

The Court of Appeals granted each of them a P1-million bail, Diaz added. But their bail was canceled after the Supreme Court decided, in the case of former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, that extraditees cannot post bail.

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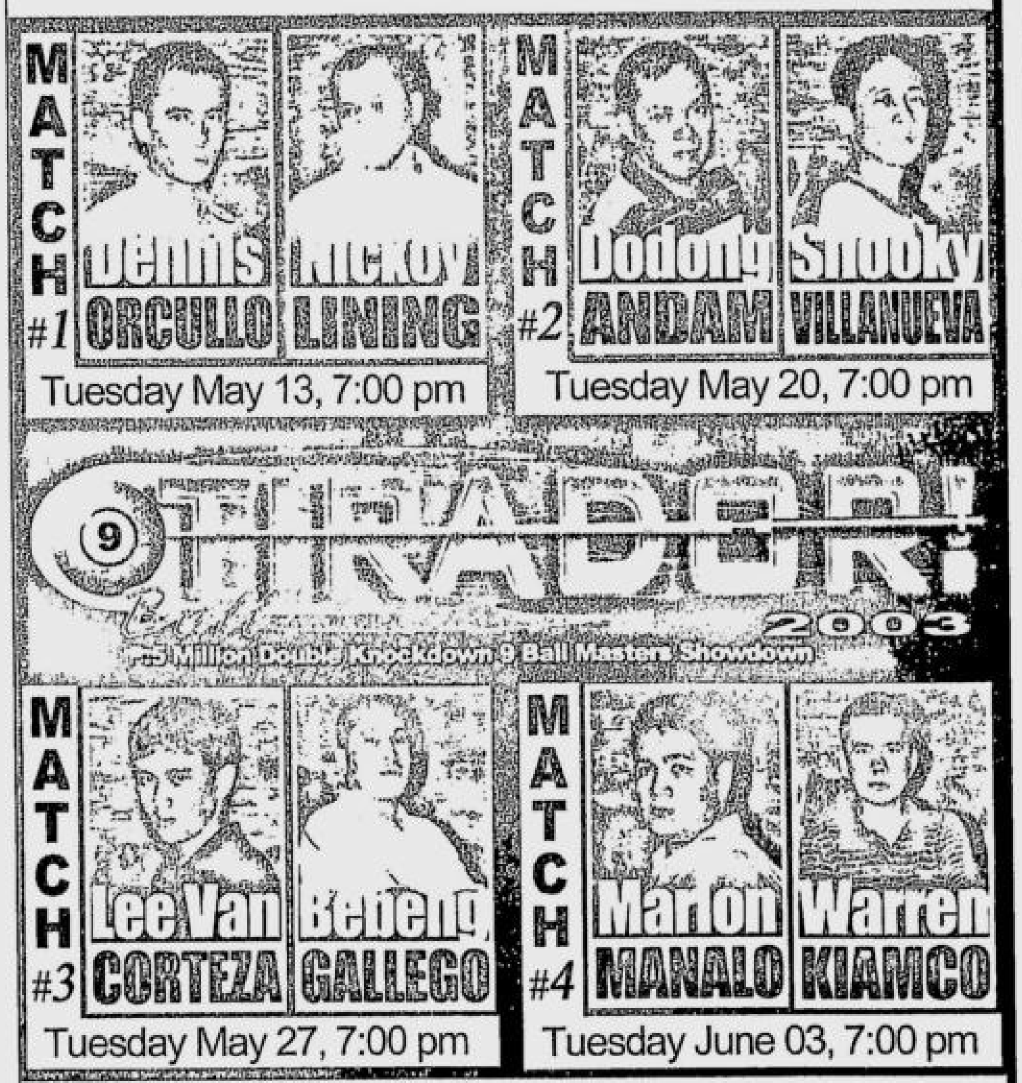

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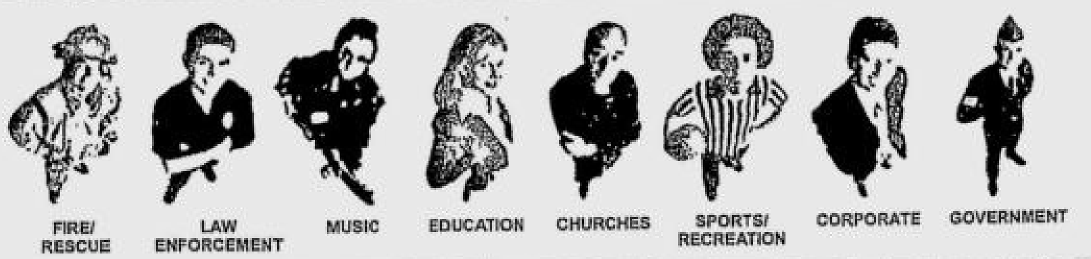

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WE WELCOME DEALERSHIP FOR NORTHERN LUZON

Tight watch over Libis nightspots

By Alcuin Papa

MEMBERS of the anti-narcotics group of the Central Police District are watching closely entertainment establishments in Libis after five suspected dealers of the designer drug Ecstasy were arrested in the area recently.

CPD Director Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro ordered the surveillance of Libis as part of his campaign against drugs.

Castro identified the suspects as Allan Dale Castro, 27, of 16 J. Timog St., Quezon City; Rocky Que, 23, of Block 2, Lot 13, Jordan Plains, Novaliches, Quezon City; Rejiel Orocay, 28, of 1905 Daniel St., Jordan Plains, Novaliches; Randy Tan, 27 of 14 Jackson St., Greenhills West, San Juan, Metro Manila; Frederick Bucalan, 29, of Unit 1-A Cluster 4, San Francisco Gardens, Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City; and Dennis Innocencio, 33, of PC Santos Street, Ugong, Pasig.

About P500,000 worth of Ecstasy were found on the suspects.

A tablet of Ecstasy has a street value of anywhere between P1,000 to P2,000. Ecstasy is favored by rich clients.

A CPD report said Castro, Que, and Tan were arrested at about 2 a.m. on May 9 in a buy-bust operation in Sibil Bar in Madison Square.

The suspects were found in possession of 30 tablets of Ecstasy and an undetermined amount of a white powder substance that could be cocaine.

Follow-up operations conducted by police based on information the three suspects had provided led to the arrest of Bucalan and Innocencio who were found with about 200 tablets of Ecstasy.

Police also reported a bribery attempt by Ronato Tan, 33, of 18 Fersville St., White Plains, Quezon City.

Tan arrived at the office of the CPD's Drug Enforcement Group and allegedly offered P30,000 to Insp. Ramon Arsenal for the release of Randy Tan last Saturday, police said.

Arsenal turned down the offer and warned Tan he would be arrested if he persisted in offering the bribe.

Tan ignored the warning and approached Chief Insp. Redentor Maranon of the CPD's Special Projects Unit and offered the same amount for the release of suspect Tan, police said. He was nabbed and charged with trying to bribe a law enforcer.

QC new shabu hub of Metro?

QUEZON City could very well be the new center of shabu-dealing in Metro Manila.

This surfaced after police seized P6 million worth of shabu from seven suspected drug dealers whom they had arrested.

Central Police District head Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro identified the suspects as Josieline Chan, 41, a businesswoman, of 5 Posiedon St., Libis, Quezon City; Edward Roxas, 40, a family driver, of Parang, Marikina; Cresencia Santos, 50, a businesswoman, of 12 Rizal St., San Jose del Monte, Bulacan; Andy Ampaso, 34, a vendor, of Barangay Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City; Arturo Gonzales; Prudencio Lampaya; and Rodrigo Quijano, all of Novaliches, Quezon City.

Chan and Roxas were arrested by members of the CPD's Special Projects Unit in a recent buy-bust operation along Roxas Boulevard in Manila. *Alcuin Papa*

BEAUTIFUL WINNERS
Newly-crowned Miss Philippines 2003 Laura Marie Dunlap (center) and runners-up (left to right) Mary Joyce Garcia, Sheryl Lou Franco, Evangeline Natalie Tarin, and Lesley Jean Samson pose for the cameras after they were proclaimed winners in last Sunday's Miss Philippines beauty pageant.
RANDY HORMILLOSA

Atienza bewailed for allowing oil firm to operate in depot

By Jerome Aning

A GROUP calling for the phaseout of the Pandacan oil depot has filed a complaint against Manila Mayor Lito Atienza before the Office of the Ombudsman for allowing Pilipinas Shell to continue operating in the facility even if the oil firm failed to obtain from the courts a Temporary Restraining Order against the oil depot's closure.

In his complaint dated May 9, lawyer Vladimir Cabigao, convenor of the United Front to Oust the Oil Depot, said Atienza had violated his duty under the Local Government Code and the Civil Code to enforce the law.

Shell, Caltex and Petron earlier filed separate cases in Manila courts seeking the nullification of the city ordinance that would shut down the depot.

The ordinance was to take effect at midnight last April 30 following the expiration of a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the oil companies and Atienza that extended the depot's stay in Pandacan on a scaled down basis.

The courts issued Caltex and Petron TROs, allowing them to operate in the depot while their cases are being heard. But Shell's petition for a TRO was not granted. Atienza, however, issued Shell a special permit to operate while its case is being resolved, saying he "wanted to be fair."

Cabigao also asked the Ombudsman to investigate three Pandacan barangay chairs for seeking "benefits" from the oil firms in return for their support of the depot.

Chairs Domingo Seposo of Barangay 836, Regalado Cabuilas of Barangay 833, and Blandino Bujatin Jr. of Barangay 834, signed a March 28 position paper urging the City Council to amend or repeal the phaseout of the depot in return for scholarships for poor but deserving students from Pandacan.

The paper also sought jobs for residents, regular medical and dental check-ups for residents, assistance in sports development activities, donation of fire trucks and fire-fighting equipment to the community, gift-giving activities and other projects during Christmas, Holy Week, etc., and livelihood projects.

Cabigao said these demands violate Section 3 of Republic Act No. 3019, which penalizes corruption of and by public officials.

Fil-American beauty wins Miss RP tilt

By Marinel R. Cruz

A SIMPLE question about the environment that she tossed at the judges won for Filipino-American Laura Marie Dunlap the Miss Philippines title in last Sunday's pageant at the Teatro Arturo Enrile in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

"What would you, just as yourself and without the help of other people, do to help the environment?"

This was how a composed and confident Dunlap responded to the night's make-or-break question, "If we turn the tables around and you would instead ask the judges a question, what would it be and why?"

Dunlap, a psychology student at the Angeles University in Pampanga, also said she wants the judges to realize that the future of the environment lies in their hands as much as it does on the winners.

As Miss Philippines, Dunlap will be spearheading vital environmental projects during her one-year reign.

She will eventually compete in the Miss Earth international beauty search participated in by over 60 countries in October.

Another Filipino-American, Evangeline Natalie Tarin, 18, was crowned Miss Philippines-Air, the beauty contest's equivalent to first runner-up.

Ilocos Region representative Sheryl Lou Franco, 20, took home the Miss Philippines-Water crown, while Lesley Jean Samson, 19, from the National Capital Region (NCR), snatched the Miss Philippines-Fire.

Mary Joyce Garcia, 17, won the Miss Eco-Tourism title.

The Miss Philippines 2003 candidates were presented to the national and international press last April 29 at the poolside of Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City.

They were screened and selected to represent the different regions of the country, and to promote the theme "the true Filipina beauty who cares for and helps in the preservation of the environment."

"This not just all about beauty but also about helping and teaching others," said Tarin, who was winner of the pageant's best in swimsuit competition.

Privatization of 4 gov't hospitals opposed

By Agnes Donato

QUEZON City officials yesterday opposed the proposed privatization of four government hospitals located in the city, saying this would disadvantage the poor residents.

In a proposed resolution, five councilors urged the Quezon City Council to oppose the planned privatization of the Philippine Heart Center, National Kidney Institute, Lung Center of the Philippines, and the Philippine Children's Medical Center.

The councilors said the four medical institutions have been "effectively servicing" residents of Quezon City, particularly the indigent families.

"The privatization of these hospitals will be detrimental to the indigent patients who might not be able to afford the financial demand and requirements of long-term treatment," the resolution said.

In an interview, Councilor Jorge Banal, one of the five authors of the resolution, said that over 50 percent of Quezon City's 2.3 million population belong to the lower class.

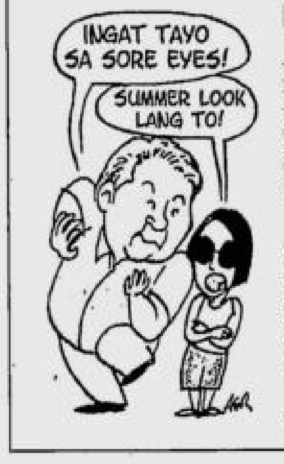
Banal said the city government could not afford to support all of the indigent residents.

He said even if the city has recently been adjudged as the country's richest local local government unit, the budget would not be enough to help the poor.

"We recognize that privatizing these hospitals will bring in benefits such as more capital and better facilities, but the drawbacks it will cause outweigh the advantages," Banal said.

He said the city government's plans to give financial help to the hospitals are underway, adding that City Hall had allocated a budget for the East Avenue Medical Center, another hospital in the city, to help it accommodate more poor patients. *With a report from Mary Viel Marquez*

Alert vs communicable diseases up


INGAT TAYO SA SORE EYES!
SUMMER LOOK LANG TO!

By Jerome Aning

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza has directed the city's health department to monitor the spread of communicable diseases in the city.

He said that based on experience, cases of sore eyes, influenza, measles and chickenpox rise during summer. But City Hall has yet to release statistics on the four diseases.

"The key to keeping cases of such diseases to minimum levels is monitoring and prevention," Atienza said.

He advised residents to immediately seek medical treatment if they exhibit symptoms of such diseases.

Atienza also cautioned residents to take preventive measures against heatstroke, which is very common during the summer months.

Heatstroke can be prevented by minimum exposure to sunlight and increased water intake.

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Terrorist tag on MILF long overdue

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

BRANDING the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) a terrorist group has become "inevitable" as a result of the bombing in Koronadal, South Cotabato, according to presidential chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao.

Inevitable? That should have been done a long time ago.

The MILF is no longer a group fighting for Moro independence or self-rule, it's a group that is trying to exterminate Christians.

* * *

President Macapagal-Arroyo has threatened to report to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) the terroristic activities of the MILF.

The President should not waste her energy because she might as well be talking to a moron.

I'm not saying members of the OIC are morons. What I'm saying is that generally, Muslims will side with fellow Muslims when Christians are the enemy. "Konsentidor," as the Tagalogs would put it.

* * *

Someday, the MILF will feel sorry for the atrocities it's committing against innocent civilians, who are mostly Christians.

The civilians in Mindanao are cowering in fear. They will no longer feel fear because they've been held in fear for so long.

And when that time comes, non-Muslim Mindanaoans will rise in indignation and go on a rampage.

When that time comes, it will be the MILF that will go running to the OIC to accuse the rampaging mob of genocide.

* * *

People should not blame military or police intelligence for its failure to prevent the bombing at Koronadal, as well as those in Davao City, and the MILF attack on Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte.

I agree with Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane's statement that the bombings and attack could not be prevented.

"We could not be everywhere, every time. The terrorists are just waiting for an opportune time to strike. We could not totally prevent such an incident from happening," Ebdane said.

* * *

The United States, which has the most widespread and sophisticated intelligence apparatus in the world, was not able to prevent the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center.

Israel, which has the Mossad, the most efficient spy network in the world, could not prevent the terrorist bombings in its midst.

If the United States and Israel are helpless against terrorist attacks, how can you expect our country, which has a pipsqueak of an intelligence network, to repel terrorists?

* * *

The best weapon against terrorism is not any government intelligence agency, but an alert citizenry.

The citizens, grown tired of being made pawns in a war not of their own making, will become the government's eyes and ears against terrorists.

Meanwhile, the government will just have to roll with the punches from the terrorists.

* * *

Supt. Elnora Bernardino, former provincial police director of Palawan, was scheduled to be arraigned today, May 13, at the Regional Trial Court in Puerto Princesa for the serious offense of violating the Omnibus Election Code.

She is charged with issuing firearms to some goons of a political candidate she was favoring during the election period a couple of years ago.

But, as in previous hearings, she is not expected to attend the arraignment. She has been doing that many times with impunity.

* * *

Palawan RTC Judge Nelia Fernandez has been lenient with Bernardo, too lenient in fact.

She has not issued a warrant for Bernardino's arrest even after the female police colonel consistently ignored her summonses.

Why does Fernandez consider Bernardino a special case?

* * *

My sources say Fernandez doesn't know where to send the court summons since Bernardino has no assignment.

Well, let me inform Fernandez that Bernardino is assigned at the Camp Crame records section.

The judge might want to issue a warrant for Bernardino's arrest since she already knows where the police colonel is assigned.

* * *

Palaweños still can't forget Bernardino's arrogant behavior even years after she was kicked out of the province.

She was the only police provincial director who went around town with Uzi-toting bodyguards in tow. The bodyguards were in civilian clothes.

"Puerto Princesa has always been a peaceful city. Why did she go around with plenty of bodyguards carrying Uzi machine pistols? *Mas mayabang pa siya sa lalake*, Mon," a resident said.

METROBRIEFS

Amok in prison

WHEN inmate Segio Cañete ran amuck at the New Bilibid Prisons last Sunday night, he killed fellow inmate Pedrito Atellao and injured Pedrito Arquillano, Hernandi Mabitag, Felix Pitago, Ernesto Callao, Felipe Siyao, and Berto Iranwere. Cañete himself was shot dead by prison guards, according to Art Dimayuga, chief of the NBP information office. With a 24-inch improvised bolo, Cañete began hacking the other inmates in Dorm 13-C at the maximum security compound at 10:30 p.m. Sunday while most of the inmates were asleep, Dimayuga said. Cañete was serving a life sentence for murder and parricide.

Christian V. Esguerra

Jobs for students

ABOUT 50 poor but deserving students were employed by the Navotas Municipal government through its Special Program for Employment of Students. Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco said the students have been assigned to work as clerks, encoders, liaison officers, and aides, and perform auxiliary jobs in different departments of the municipal government. The students, who will be working until the end of the month, will receive minimum wage, 40 percent of which is shouldered by the Department of Labor and Employment and the rest by the Navotas government.

Tina Santos

Dead man on the river

THE BODY of a homeless man who used to sleep under Jones Bridge in Manila was found floating on the Pasig River on Sunday. The unidentified man, who is in his 60s, was clad only in a pair of blue and white shorts. Police believe the victim fell into the river while he was sleeping under the bridge. Ronald Reyes, of 115 Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila, was swimming in the river when he found the body. He brought the body to shore and informed police of his find. The body is now at the Popular Funeral Homes for autopsy and safekeeping.

Philip C. Tubeza

Stabbed while asleep

LABORER Rafael Tayab's luck ran out on Sunday when his house mate Mario Lapizora stabbed him dead while he was sleeping in their unit at Building 11 of Temporary Housing in Vitas, Tondo, police said. Tayab, 31, died from a single stab wound in his left armpit, police said. Lapizora also stabbed and injured another house mate, welder Gary Pabalate, 35. Police said a drunken Lapizora also choked the daughter of Tayab, who was on the first floor of the housing unit. But Tayab's daughter escaped, and the suspect forced his way into the victims' room. Lapizora fled after the stabbing.

Philip C. Tubeza

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 13, 2003
4th Week of Easter

1st Reading:	Acts 11:19-26
Gospel:	Jn 10:22-30

The time came for the feast of the Dedication. It was winter and Jesus walked back and forth in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in doubt? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have already told you but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name proclaim who I am, but you don't believe because, as I said, you are not my sheep.

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them; they follow me and I give them eternal life. They shall never perish and no one will ever steal them from me. What the Father has given me is stronger than everything and no one can snatch it from the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Commentary

The Temple was a visible sign to the Jews of God's presence among them. It stood in Jerusalem as a reminder that God has chosen them as his people. They belong to him, and in a way, He belongs to them. One winter day, Jesus boldly challenged those claims, in the Temple, and on the feast that celebrates the Temple's rededication after pagan desecration. He proclaimed a new way of belonging to God who is now Father: becoming Jesus' disciple. To be in the hand of Jesus is to be in the hand of the Father. And that hand is more powerful than any other and so no one can snatch away the disciples from its hold. There the disciples are safe . . . warm . . . even on wintry days . . . forever.

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NEW EXCISE TAX LAW:

Critical to local automotive industry's growth

WITH the abundance of foreign players, it would seem that the nation's automotive industry is on the path to recovery. Far from it, after years of trying to survive ever-changing revenue regulations that each new administration imposes, the industry is struggling to achieve some semblance of progress like its record sales in 1996.

The ASEAN automobile market registered its highest growth levels in 1996-97 prior to the Asian financial crisis, suffering a slump in the following years. By the end of last year, however, after a five-year recovery period, Malaysia had already surpassed its pre-crisis volume by 127% while Indonesia practically eclipsed its 1996 volume. Thailand is just 30% below its pre-crisis sales level with sales of 409,459 units in 2002. The Philippines, on the other hand, sold only 85,616 units in 2002, roughly 53% of the record sales in 1996.

Not helping alleviate matters in the local automotive industry is the current excise tax structure based on engine displacement. The current taxation system, which was formulated when fuel savings was the primordial concern, is no longer viable in today's scenario where the government needs to generate the much-needed revenue to spur the country's growth.

RR-4-2003 is not the solution.

Efforts to reform the current excise taxation system has led to the creation of Revenue Regulation No. 4-2003 issued by the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) which was protested by the local automotive industry. Right from the start, it was clearly evident that RR-4-2003 would not bring remarkable benefits to the government, industry and consumers.

If RR-4-2003 is to be implemented, the resulting situation alone could hardly be considered conducive to the expansion of the market since it will make prices of AUVs and various passenger vans skyrocket to unaffordable levels by as much as 35-50%. That means a basic AUV model with a suggested retail price of P664,679 would fetch a whopping P997,020.

Aside from that, the government will stand to lose a projected P1.3 billion in revenues, erosion of the entire automotive industry, further loss of employment for Filipinos and loss of investor confidence in government policies.

The need for a value-based excise tax.

Following **President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's Executive Order No. 156**, a priority measure that seeks the restructuring of the 20-year-old motor vehicle taxation system to a simple, transparent and equitable value-based taxation system, the Senate ways and means committee led by Senator Ralph Recto has sponsored **Senate Bill No. 2517**. The bill has a counterpart version in the House of Representatives under **House Bill No. 5719** filed by Negros Occidental (Western Visayas) Rep. Julio A. Ledesma IV which was approved 125-24 with no abstentions on the third and final reading of the bill.

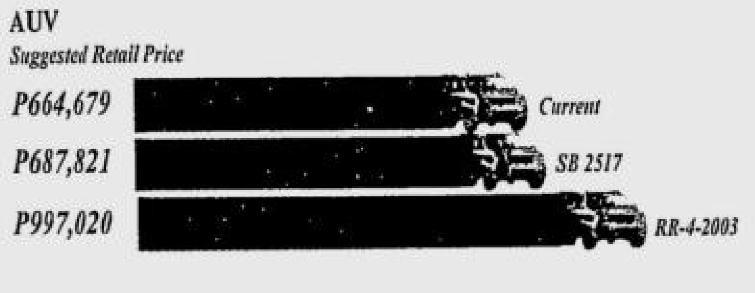
The bill proposes amendments such as a redefinition of the term "automobile" to include almost all vehicles, namely AUVs, SUVs, vans and pickups, the removal of the engine displacement and differentiation according to fuel type, the adoption of a four-tiered value-based system of taxation, and the indexation of the net manufacturer's price (used as base of taxation) once every two years or when an extraordinary peso movement occurs.

Under the proposed value-based system:

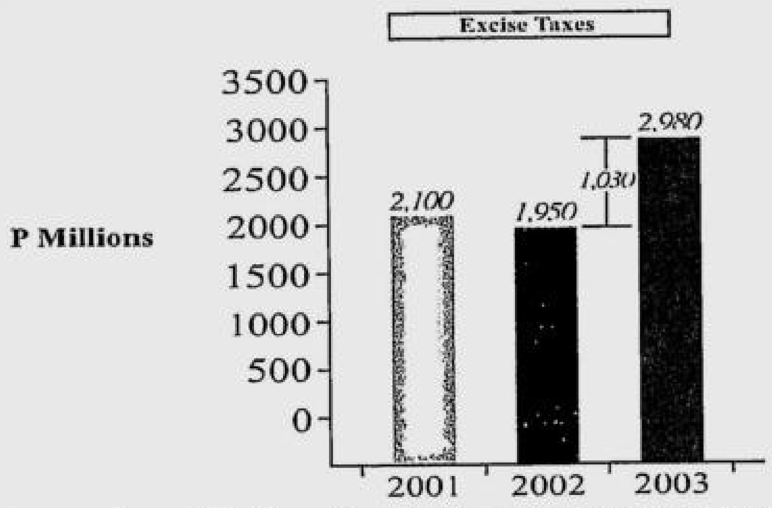
- **Vehicles with a net manufacturer's price of P500,000 and less will be imposed an excise tax of 3%**
- **P15,000 plus 15% in excess of P500,000 for autos between P500,001 and P1 million**
- **P90,000 plus 30% in excess of P1 million for those over P1 million to P2 million**
- **P390,000 plus 50% of value in excess of P2 million for vehicles over P2 million**

A call to pass Senate Bill 2517.

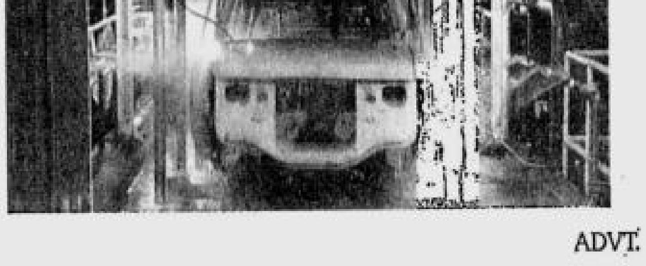
The new Senate Bill 2517, unlike RR-4-2003, will have a minimal impact on the cost of AUVs, the most preferred vehicle of most Filipinos. That means a basic AUV model with a suggested retail price of P664,679 would slightly increase to P687,821. With the new scheme, the government will be able to equitably collect the taxes of automobiles properly.



Immediate passage of the new excise tax bill will expand the tax base, thereby increasing government revenues. New simulations submitted by the DoF showed the revenue measure is expected to bring in an additional P1.2 billion in excise tax, plus about P500 million of VAT, mainly due to the expected 36% improvement of vehicle sales for the year. Whether or not the expansion happens, the government still stands to earn about P1 billion.



The new excise tax bill will result in a win-win situation that will lead to market expansion for the automotive industry, as well as increase investor confidence that will transform the domestic market into a base for export of vehicles and parts. What's more, with a wider choice of car models that's competitively-priced entering the market, more Filipinos will finally fulfill their dream of owning a brand-new vehicle. This increase in economic activity will also translate to more local employment and help sustain more than 77,000 Filipinos in the legitimate automotive industry. When the Senate approves the new excise tax bill, maybe then we can truly say that the nation's automotive industry is on the road to recovery and growth,



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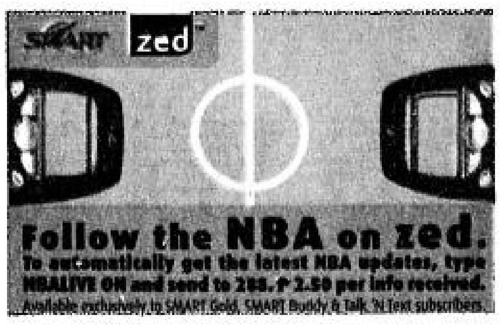

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GMA: Go on with Palaro in Lanao

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday declared Lanao del Norte will definitely host the off-again-on-again Palarong Pambansa.

The fate of the Palaro in Lanao, which had been suspended indefinitely due to peace and security concerns, took a favorable turn after the President visited Maigo, site three weeks ago of clashes between government and rebel forces.

Although the President failed to state a new date for the Games, her support provided relief to the province which hopes to stage the Palaro despite the recent attack by Moro Islamic Liberation Front forces in Maigo and Balo-i, towns near Tubod, main hub of the Games.

The President was accompanied in her visit by Gov. Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo and her husband, Rep. Abdullah Dimaporo, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya and Southern Command chief Gen. Roy Kyamco.

Ms Macapagal was on her way to visit North Cotabato and Zamboanga, two provinces which were also affected by the Muslim conflict.

The President didn't specify the new date of the Palaro but stressed she just wanted to give the province more time to prepare for the Games which has slipped from Lanao del Norte thrice already in the past.

She added that she also wants full clearance from the military to stage the Palaro which she is expected to declare open at the Mindanao Civic Center.

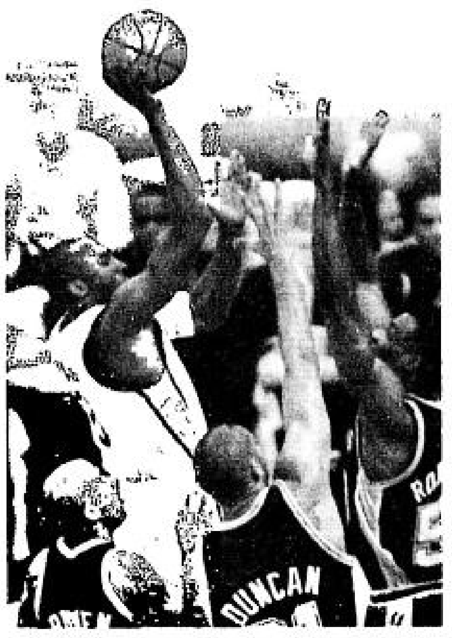
Sources said the Palaro will have to be staged before the June 9 opening of classes to avoid technicalities arising from students-athletes who will move from high school to college or those graduating from elementary to high school.

However, the Philippine Sports Commission and the Department of Education are trying to reach an agreement which should resolve any problems that could arise if the Palaro is held after the school year begins.

PSC Chair Eric Buhain, upon orders from Malacañang, had earlier ordered an indefinite suspension of the Palaro.

North Cotabato Gov. Manny Piñol has been batting for the Palaro staging in Tubod "if only to show that acts of terrorism will never affect the Mindanao people's way of life."

WHAT'S INSIDE



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Delariarte opens title defense A27

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RP boxers leave today for Lithuania A28

Coca-Cola, Alaska squads tested for drugs; Torion in counseling

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WHILE Jimwell Torion is undergoing drug counseling, the Philippine Basketball Association yesterday completed the first in a series of "surprise" drug tests that zeroed in on the entire teams of Coca-Cola and Alaska Milk.

A team of officials led by technical chief Perry Martinez and representatives from the Department of Health dropped by unannounced during workouts of the two teams at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center in Quezon City.

Martinez said 26 persons on each squad were subjected to the mandatory drug check, which is part of the league's massive campaign to rid the PBA of the drug menace.

"Everybody has been very cooperative which made it possible for us to conduct the test smoothly," Martinez told the INQUIRER.

The test covered all players in the active and injured list, coaching staff and even utility personnel like ball boys.

He added that the results of the drug test will be known a week later because samples that yield positive results would still be submitted to the Philippine National Police crime laboratory for confirmation.

He also reported that all PBA personnel, led by Commissioner Noli Eala, passed the drug test with flying colors when almost 100 of them underwent the test.

Martinez said the per-team anti-drug measure is done unannounced to ensure accurate results of the tests.

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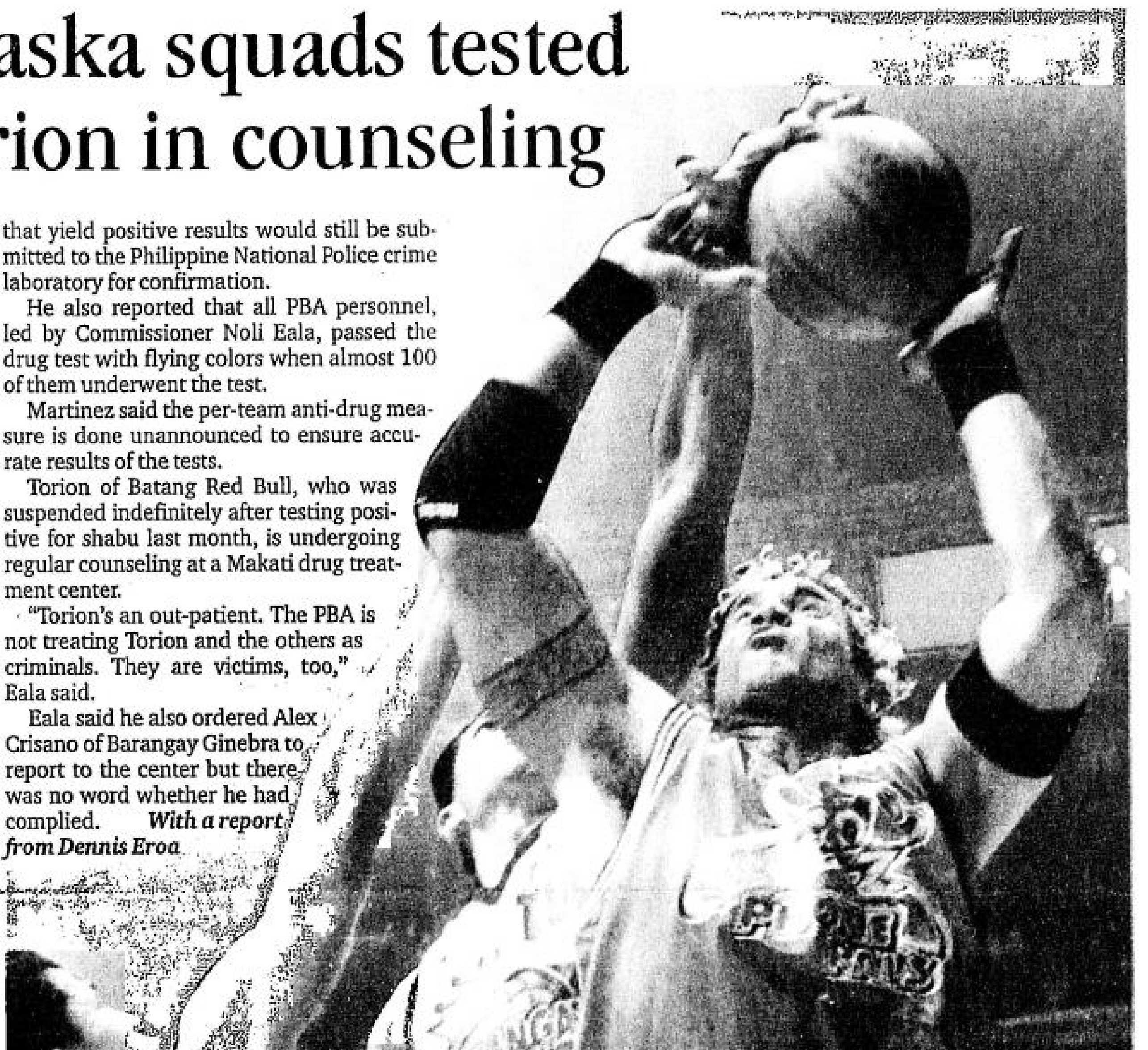

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SPORTS

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Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

GMA: Go on with Palaro in Lanao

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday declared Lanao del Norte will definitely host the off-again-on-again Palarong Pambansa.

The fate of the Palaro in Lanao, which had been suspended indefinitely due to peace and security concerns, took a favorable turn after the President visited Maigo, site three weeks ago of clashes between government and rebel forces.

Although the President failed to state a new date for the Games, her support provided relief to the province which hopes to stage the Palaro despite the recent attack by Moro Islamic Liberation Front forces in Maigo and Balo-i, towns near Tubod, main hub of the Games.

The President was accompanied in her visit by Gov. Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo and her husband, Rep. Abdullah Dimaporo, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya and Southern Command chief Gen. Roy Kyamco.

Ms Macapagal was on her way to visit North Cotabato and Zamboanga, two provinces which were also affected by the Muslim conflict.

The President didn't specify the new date of the Palaro but stressed she just wanted to give the province more time to prepare for the Games which has slipped from Lanao del Norte thrice already in the past.

She added that she also wants full clearance from the military to stage the Palaro which she is expected to declare open at the Mindanao Civic Center.

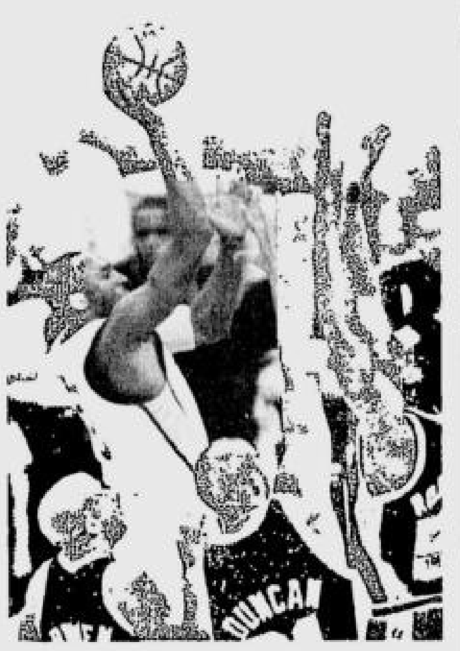
Sources said the Palaro will have to be staged before the June 9 opening of classes to avoid technicalities arising from students-athletes who will move from high school to college or those graduating from elementary to high school.

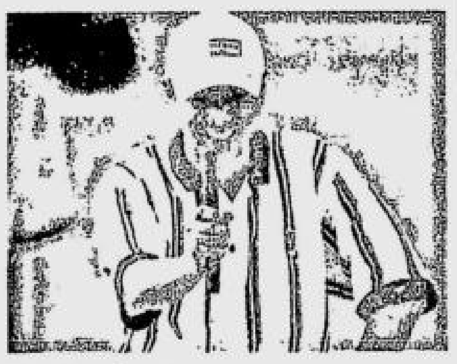
However, the Philippine Sports Commission and the Department of Education are trying to reach an agreement which should resolve any problems that could arise if the Palaro is held after the school year begins.

PSC Chair Eric Buhain, upon orders from Malacañang, had earlier ordered an indefinite suspension of the Palaro.

North Cotabato Gov. Manny Piñol has been batting for the Palaro staging in Tubod "if only to show that acts of terrorism will never affect the Mindanao people's way of life."

WHAT'S INSIDE


Lakers, Kings, 76ers force 2-2 deadlocks A26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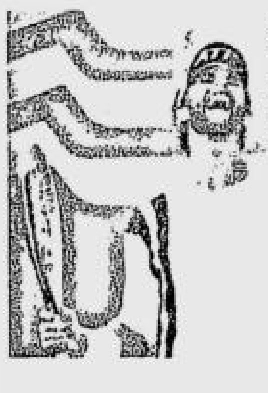
Mantilla makes history A27

RP boxers leave today for Lithuania A28

Coca-Cola, Alaska squads tested for drugs; Torion in counseling

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WHILE Jimwell Torion is undergoing drug counseling, the Philippine Basketball Association yesterday completed the first in a series of "surprise" drug tests that zeroed in on the entire teams of Coca-Cola and Alaska Milk.

A team of officials led by technical chief Perry Martinez and representatives from the Department of Health dropped by unannounced during workouts of the two teams at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center in Quezon City.

Martinez said 26 persons on each squad were subjected to the mandatory drug check, which is part of the league's massive campaign to rid the PBA of the drug menace.

"Everybody has been very cooperative which made it possible for us to conduct the test smoothly," Martinez told the INQUIRER.

The test covered all players in the active and injured list, coaching staff and even utility personnel like ball boys.

He added that the results of the drug test will be known a week later because samples that yield positive results would still be submitted to the Philippine National Police crime laboratory for confirmation.

He also reported that all PBA personnel, led by Commissioner Noli Eala, passed the drug test with flying colors when almost 100 of them underwent the test.

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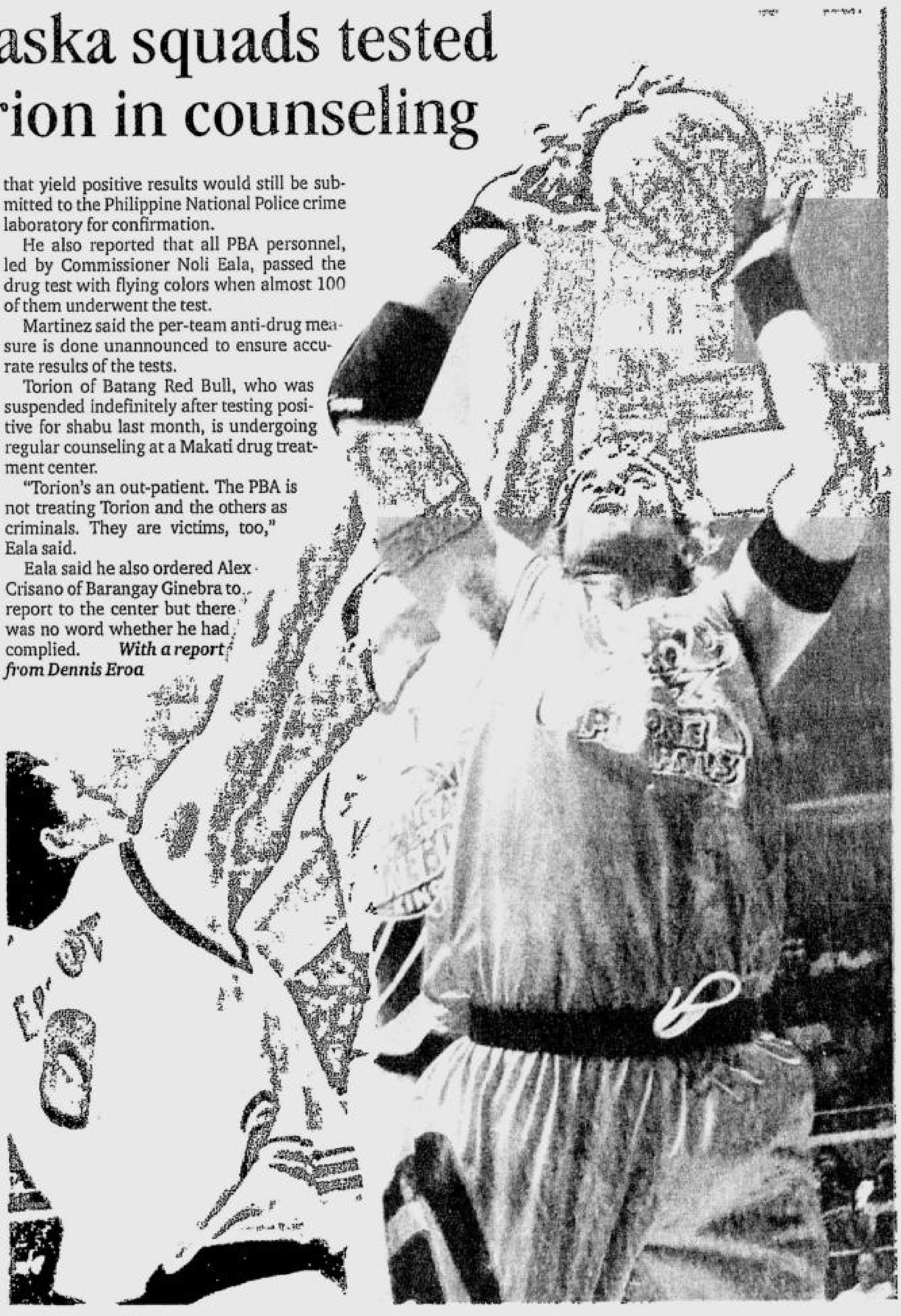
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AT A GLANCE

NBA PLAYOFFS 2003

SECOND ROUND

Eastern Conference

(1) Detroit vs. (4) Philadelphia

Pistons 2, Sixers 2
Game 1: Detroit 98, Philadelphia 87
Game 2: Detroit 104, Philadelphia 97
Game 3: Philadelphia 93, Detroit 83
Game 4: Philadelphia 95, Detroit 82
Game 5 at Detroit (May 15, TBD)
Game 6 at Philadelphia (May 17, TBD)
*Game 7 at Detroit (May 19, TBD)

(2) New Jersey vs (6) Boston

Nets 3, Celtics 0
Game 1: New Jersey 97, Boston 93
Game 2 : New Jersey 104, Boston 95
Game 3: New Jersey 94, Boston 76
Game 4 at Boston (May 13, 8 a.m.)
*Game 5 at New Jersey (May 15, TBD)
*Game 6 at Boston (May 17, TBD)
*Game 7 at New Jersey (May 19, TBD)

WESTERN CONFERENCE

(1) San Antonio vs (5) LA Lakers

Spurs 2, Lakers 2
Game 1: San Antonio 87, Lakers 82
Game 2: San Antonio 114, Lakers 95
Game 3: Los Angeles 110, San Antonio 95
Game 4: Los Angeles 99, San Antonio 95
Game 5 at San Antonio (May 14, 9:30 a.m.)
Game 6 at Los Angeles (May 16, TBD)
*Game 7 at San Antonio (May 18, TBD)

(2) Sacramento vs (3) Dallas

Kings 2, Mavs 2
Game 1: Sacramento 124, Dallas 113
Game 2: Dallas 132, Sacramento 110
Game 3: Dallas 141, Sacramento 137
Game 4: Sacramento 99, Dallas 83
Game 5 at Dallas (May 14, 7 a.m.)
Game 6 at Sacramento (May 16, TBD)
*Game 7 at Dallas (May 18, TBD)

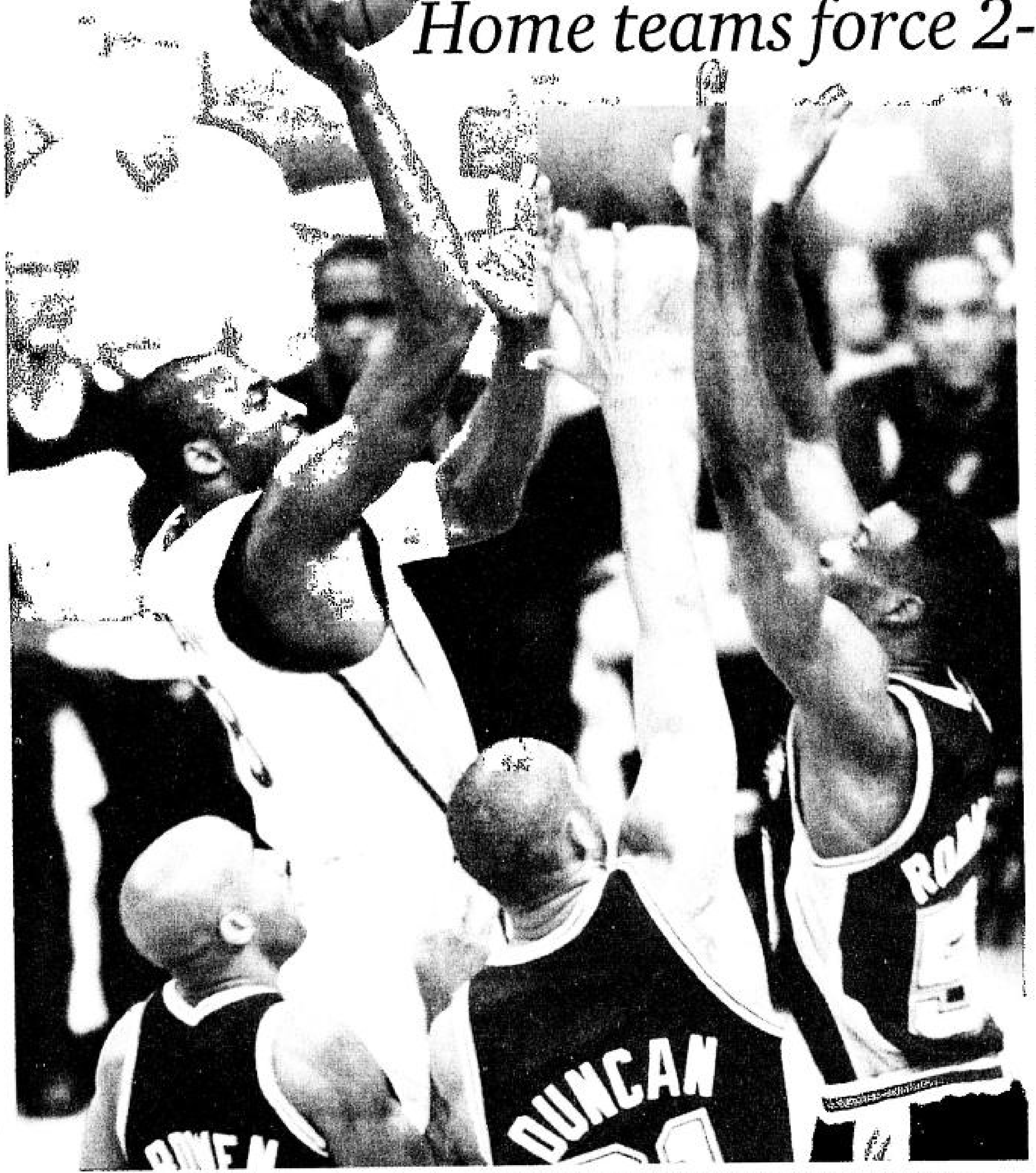
* If necessary
TBD (To Be Determined)

New Jersey vs Boston live

THE NEW Jersey Nets try to complete their sweep of the Boston Celtics today (Tuesday, May 13) in Game 4 of their NBA Eastern Conference semifinals live at 8 a.m. on Solar Sports. Replay is at 8 p.m.

Lakers, Kings, 76ers win

Home teams force 2-2 standoffs



THREE AGAINST ONE: Kobe Bryant soars for a jumper against David Robinson, Tim Duncan and Bruce Bowen. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES—Home was the place to be in the National Basketball Association playoffs on Sunday as the Los Angeles Lakers, Sacramento and Philadelphia all posted home wins to pull even in their second-round series.

The Lakers, lacking their head coach and with their backs against the wall, eked out a 99-95 victory over San Antonio to even their best-of-seven Western Conference semi-final series at two games each.

Elsewhere in the West, Sacramento bounced back from Saturday's double overtime defeat to post a 99-83 victory over Dallas to make it a 2-2 series, while in the East Philadelphia beat Detroit 95-82 to square their semi-final series at two-all.

Trailing by as many as 16 points late in the second quarter and by 10 points midway through the third, the Lakers were in serious danger of falling behind 3-1 to the top-seeded Spurs.

But behind Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal, Los Angeles powered their way back into the game and outplayed San Antonio in the waning moments.

"It's the heart of a champion," Bryant said. "We don't budge. We don't go anywhere. Knock us down, we get right back up."

O'Neal, a poor free-throw shooter, sank a pair with 1:17 left to even the contest, 95-95. The All-Star center then stole a pass by Tim Duncan intended for Stephen Jackson in the paint with a minute remaining, and Bryant sank 1-of-2 free throws 12 seconds later to put the Lakers ahead for good.

Bryant finished with 35 points and O'Neal had 29 and 17 rebounds for Los Angeles, who shot just 39 percent (28-of-71) but made 35-of-45 free throws. Bryant went 14-of-17 from the stripe and O'Neal a surprising 17-of-23.

Phil Jackson resting

The Lakers were missing coach Phil Jackson, who was resting after undergoing an angioplasty on Saturday to clear a 90-percent blockage in a coronary artery. Assistant Jim Cleamons, a longtime assistant under Jackson, coached the Lakers in Jackson's absence.

It was not known if Jackson would be cleared to travel to San Antonio for Tuesday's Game 5, but Cleamons quipped that if Jackson's heart could survive Sunday's game he must be on the mend.

"It's resiliency," Cleamons said. "It's one of this team's strongest characteristics." Philadelphia's superstar guard Allen Iverson showed the same virtue. Three days after he blew a chance to even the series against Detroit, he seized his second opportunity.

Iverson scored 15 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter and added 11 assists to lead the 76ers over the Pistons.

Admitting he "let one slip away" Thursday in Game 2 when he missed two free throws with 15 seconds left in regulation of an overtime defeat at Detroit, Iverson made sure the Sixers would get even with a terrific all-around performance.

"I'm not surprised at all. I feel good about what we accomplished," said Iverson, who was 13-of-27 from the field and 9-of-13 from the line.

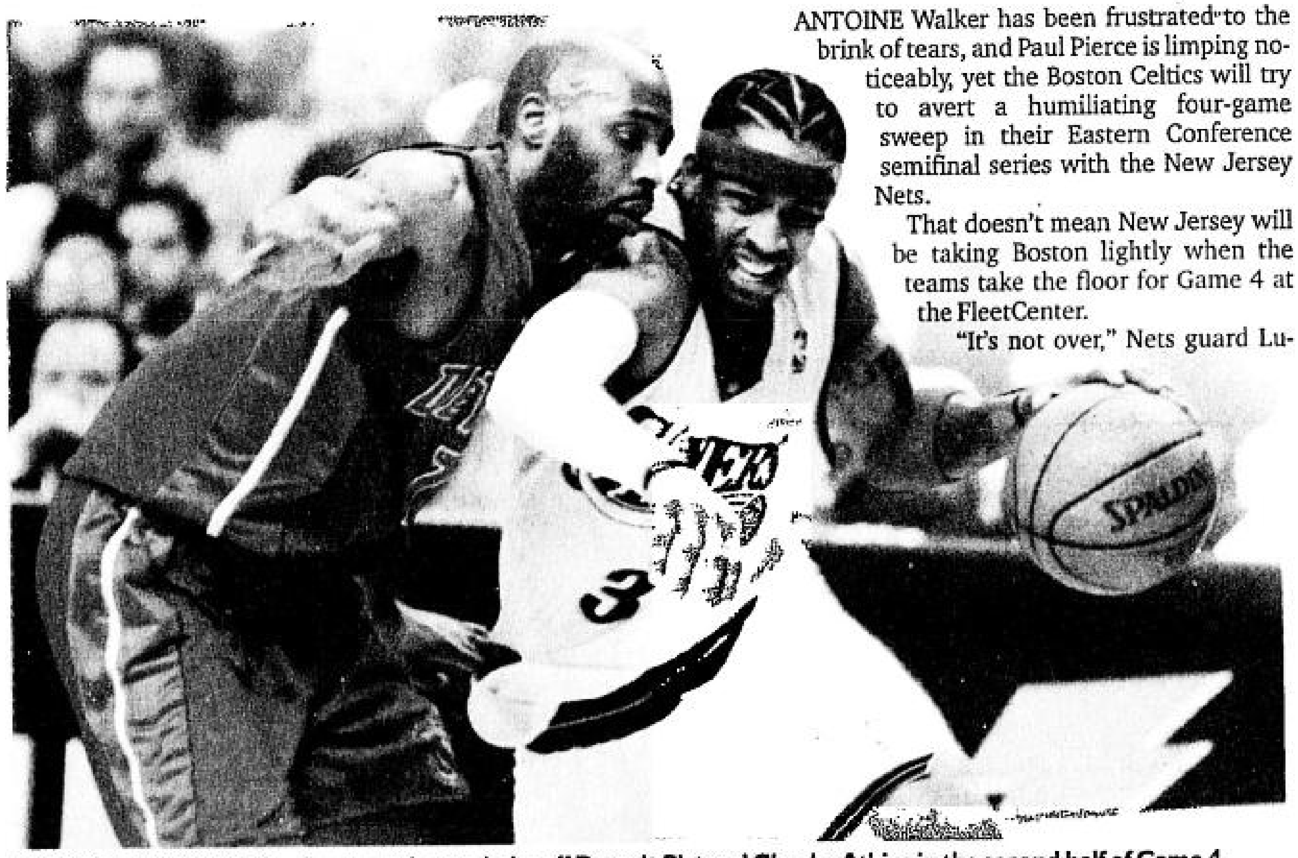
The Sixers won games in back-to-back days here with Iverson dishing out a total of 22 assists to go with 61 points.

Sacramento and Dallas also returned to the court for the second time in as many days, and it was the Kings who, just 24 hours after losing in double-overtime, breezed past the lethargic Mavericks.

Hedo Turkoglu scored 17 points to lead six players in double figures for the Kings, who wasted little time insuring they would not trail 3-1 heading back to Dallas for Game 5 on Tuesday.

The Kings took the lead for good on a basket by Turkoglu 4:34 into the contest. *AFP*

Nets shoot for sweep vs Celts today



TOUGH DEFENSE: Allen Iverson tries to shake off Detroit Pistons' Chucky Atkins in the second half of Game 4. Iverson had 36 points and 11 assists as the 76ers evened their second-round series 2-2 by beating Detroit 95-82. AP

ANTOINE Walker has been frustrated to the brink of tears, and Paul Pierce is limping noticeably, yet the Boston Celtics will try to avert a humiliating four-game sweep in their Eastern Conference semifinal series with the New Jersey Nets.

That doesn't mean New Jersey will be taking Boston lightly when the teams take the floor for Game 4 at the FleetCenter.

"It's not over," Nets guard Lucious Harris said after Friday's convincing 94-76 Game 3 victory in Boston. "It feels a little over, but I'm sure come Monday, reality will set in that we still got one more game to win."

Nets coach Byron Scott, who took considerable heat for insulting Celtics fans in the media last week, is also unwilling to write Boston off just yet. But he is clearly relishing the opportunity to end the Celtics' season on their home court.

"We're looking forward to it," he said. "We know it's not going to be easy Monday. The last thing that anybody wants when you're on a team is to get swept."

New Jersey sent Boston packing last spring, beating the Celtics in six games in the Eastern Conference finals.

With Pierce hobbled by a strained muscle in his right leg and Walker struggling through a dismal series, Boston looks ready to be had.

Pierce, however, insists his teammates will not go down without a fight.

"We're going to lay down or we're going to do something about it," said Pierce, who led Boston with 23 points in Game 3. "Knowing myself, my teammates, we're not a group that's going to lay down."

Walker, who has clearly been bothered by Nets forward Kenyon Martin's stifling defense for a second straight postseason, boiled over in frustration by snapping at a longtime heckler Friday. *AP*

Castroneves takes pole

INDIANAPOLIS—Helio Castroneves put himself in the best possible position to win a record third straight Indy 500.

A day after celebrating his 28th birthday, the Brazilian added another line to an almost flawless Indy resume by becoming the first two-time defending champ to win the pole.

His four-lap qualifying average of 231.725 mph was the fastest ever by a non-turbocharged car on the 2 1/2-mile oval.

"This place is magic," he said. "This year we were trying to work patiently to get a good speed and, all of a sudden, we end up on the pole."

Although "Spiderman" didn't celebrate by climbing the fence as he does after race victories, he shed tears of joy, laughed and even took a friendly jab at his best friend, countryman Tony Kanaan.

Kanaan smashed a birthday cake in Castroneves' face Saturday, less than 24 hours before Castroneves smashed Kanaan's four-lap average of 231.006 and knocked him off the pole for the May 25 race.

The buddies will start side-by-side on the first of 11 three-car rows.

CASTRONEVES: Birthday gift. AP

"He said now we can share the cake," Kanaan said. "It's all good."

Castroneves' pole-winning run was as much about timing as it was about speed.

He waited patiently for more than 4 1/2 hours Sunday as Roger Penske's team worked on the car and Castroneves tried to get comfortable in his Toyota-powered Dallara on a cold track with wind gusts over 30 mph.

During the 30-minute morning practice, Castroneves said his car had too much drag. By mid-afternoon, the wind was slowing and the car was in perfect working order.

"It was getting much more balance," he said. "When we did a 231.7 in practice, I said 'Woe, woe, woe, now is the time to go.'"

Castroneves' first two laps, 231.673 and 232.215, were the fastest by any driver Sunday. He gave Penske a record 12th pole to go along with a record 12 Indy victories.

The only real competition came from Kanaan and Robby Gordon, teammates for Andretti Green Racing.

For new team owner Michael Andretti, the day was again filled with near-misses.

He barely avoided hitting the wall in turn two of his first qualifying lap, and his 227.739 put him on the outside of Row 5 for his 14th and final start at Indianapolis. The 40-year-old Andretti, who has led more laps at Indy than any non-winner, is retiring after the race to concentrate on running the team he and two partners bought late last year. *AP*

Dumars bags Executive of the Year award

DETROIT—Joe Dumars will be honored as the Sporting News' NBA Executive of the Year, a source within the league said Sunday.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the Detroit Pistons' president of basketball operations will get the award Wednesday before Game 5 of the Detroit-Philadelphia playoff series.

Last year, Dumars finished second to New Jersey's Rod Thorn for the award, which is determined by voting among the league's executives.

Dumars made several moves before the season to help Detroit win 50 games, a second straight Central Division title and the top seeding in the Eastern Conference playoffs. *AP*

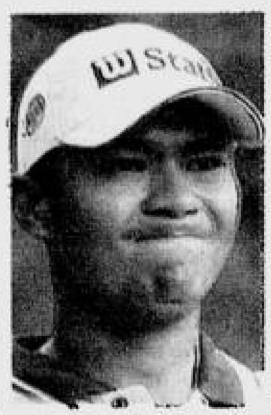
COOSOME TWOSOME
Hollywood actor Ben Affleck gets a smile from girlfriend Jennifer Lopez during the Los Angeles Lakers-San Antonio Spurs NBA Western Conference semifinal in Los Angeles Sunday night. The two enjoyed the game court side as the Lakers defeated the Spurs 99-85 to tie their best-of-seven series at 2-2. REUTERS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RP AMATEUR

Jerome opens defense today

By Jong Arcano



DELARIARTE

LAST year's winning struggle should have given Jerome Delariarte an inkling of this kind of test.

In Delariarte's words, the venue transfer from the Dye course of Eagle Ridge to the Langer course of Riviera would require more than skill and talent if he were to make a successful defense of the Philippine amateur golf championship which starts today.

The conditions, Delariarte said, are more demanding at Riviera than when he won last year at the expense of the now professional Angelo Que.

"It's not just accuracy from tee to green but a lot of strategy," said the 24-year-old Delariarte of the Langer course, which offers very narrow landing areas, uneven fairway lies and undulating greens needing a very good read.

The course is so tough Delariarte doesn't have time to worry about his possible challengers which should include Juvic Pagunsan, who is coming off a victory in the Canlubang club championship, veterans like Tommy Manotoc and even business executive Abe Rosal.

Rosal has proven he can pose a big problem to the young guns the way he did in the DHL Open in Canlubang last January.

It will also be a sentimental event for Delariarte and the rest of the members of Manila Southwoods as they will be joined by teammate Temyong Murakami, who is still mourning the gruesome murder of his father recently.

Murakami, who became the youngest champion of the event five years ago, said he's dedicating his stint to the memory of the man who taught him the game.

The first two rounds will serve as the stroke play eliminations with the top 32 players advancing to the tournament proper where play shifts to match on Thursday. Winners of the first round advance to the Round-of-16 Friday with the quarterfinals and the semifinals slated the next day. The last two players surviving after Saturday will dispute the crown via a 36-hole showdown.

The other players to watch are Jay Bayron, JR Tanpinco, Boyet Saragoza and national caddies champion Joenard Rates.

The event is sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission and DHL Wide Wide World Express.

Circuit races up next for Tour vets

By June Navarro

ALL 84 riders in the Tour Pilipinas 2003 bikathon led by overall champion Arnel Quirimit will enjoy only a few months of rest.

Representing their respective teams, the Tour veterans will mount their bikes again in a series of circuit races to be held in at least six key cities starting in September.

Race manager Paquito Rivas said the Tour Pilipinas management committee headed by Air 21 chairman Bert Lina and president Lito Alvarez want to hold the races in Puerto Princesa, Bacolod, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Kidapawan City in North Cotabato and Metro Manila.

North Cotabato Gov. Manny Pinol had already told organizers he wants to host one of the legs in Kidapawan.

Rivas said the overall champion will be determined by a point system to be used for every leg of the event set for six straight weekends.

"We want to discover new talents in the sport while keeping the pool of riders in the Tour competitive all year long," said Tour executive director Mar Mendoza.

Details of the circuit races will be discussed after all kinks of the recent Tour, like the liquidation of expenses and disbursement of prizes are ironed out, Mendoza added.

A month after the circuit races, the Tour will hold its qualifying races for the 2004 season in Real, Quezon, Argao, Cebu and Antipolo City.

Rivas said no concessions would be given to the top finishers of the recent Tour and stringent measures would be installed instead to insure only the crack riders advance to the bikathon proper.

At the same time, Tour physician Dr. Rizaldy Bulatao announced at the end of the bikathon Sunday that the test of urine samples of riders taken after the San Fernando-Baguio City stage last Thursday proved negative. *With a report from Alaine Lou Antonio*

QUIRIMIT

Toms hangs on, wins by 2 in Wachovia tilt

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—David Toms survived a quadruple bogey at the closing hole to win the 5.6 million-dollar Wachovia Championship on Sunday by two strokes over Fiji's Vijay Singh and Americans Brent Geiberger and Robert Gamez.

"I felt in total control, at least for 71 holes," said Toms, who carded a one-over-par 73 to finish at 10-under-par 278. "My game plan was to make a birdie and finish in style. I wasn't nervous with a six-shot lead. I felt like I got past 17 without a disaster, the tournament was mine.

"That's why the last hole was such a shock, because my emotions were in check. I think in the back of my mind I was trying to hit it a little too hard off the tee. It just came out of nowhere."

He hit his worst tee shot of the week, spraying it some 50 yards wide of where he was aiming at the 478-yard, par-four 18th.

"Some guy said something about (Jean) Van de Velde," revealed Toms, referring to the Frenchman who triple-bogeyed the final hole at the 1999 British Open before losing a playoff.

With that thought planted unpleasantly in his mind, Toms pitched out sideways a little too hard, and his ball came within a yard of rolling into the creek left of the fairway.

He advanced his third shot 130 yards to the fairway, from where he had only 108 yards to the hole. But his fourth shot, with a sand wedge, came up 46 feet short, and his first putt went six feet beyond the cup. *AFP*

MANTILLA: Hungry for title

REUTERS

Spain netter makes history

ROME—Felix Mantilla became the first unseeded player to win in Rome since the Open Era began in 1968 by beating fourth seed Roger Federer in the Rome Masters final on Sunday.

Mantilla, who had battled through four tough matches in the tournament to make his first final of the year, beat Switzerland's Federer, 7-5, 6-2, 7-6, to win his 10th title.

"I believe I won today because I had the hunger. I played with heart and courage and everything I had," Mantilla told reporters afterwards.

"Of course it's the biggest victory of my life. It'll give me lots of confidence for the future."

Federer, who had only dropped one set in his last nine claycourt matches, was bidding to claim his fourth title of the year, after triumphing in Marseille, Dubai and Munich.

He mixed the pace of his groundstrokes to create seven break points, but wasted them all, in the first set.

The 29-year-old Mantilla then took advantage of a double fault and a long forehand to break in the 12th game and win the first set.

The fourth seed stepped up his game at the beginning of the second set, breaking Mantilla's service with some heavy hitting from the baseline but the Spaniard broke back in the sixth and eighth games of the second set to run out a comfortable 6-2 winner. *AFP*

Justine clips Kim

BERLIN—Justine Henin-Hardenne survived three match points to overcome Kim Clijsters 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 in a thrilling all-Belgian German Open final on Sunday. Clijsters, who squandered her opportunities to seal victory, hit a backhand wide to bow out after two hours and 15 minutes. *Reuters*

Rosie Jones ends drought

NORTH AUGUSTA, South Carolina—Winning for the United States was nice, but ending a personal drought was even better for Rosie Jones.

Jones gave the United States its first win on the LPGA Tour this season, shooting a two-under-par 70 on Sunday to post a three-shot win over Wendy Ward at the Asahi Ryokuken International Championship.

It was the 13th career title for the 43-year-old Jones, but her first since capturing the 2001 Big Apple Classic. In the process, Jones halted, at least temporarily, the success of international players on the LPGA Tour.

An American had not won an LPGA event since Meg Mallon captured the Canadian Women's Open last August. This was the eighth event of the season.

Fil-Am Dorothy Delasin carded a 69 and wound up at 281, eight shots off Jones. *AFP*

Gamblers' delight

YOU may not have noticed it yet, but the format of the ongoing PBA is anti-excellence. It encourages mediocrity and therefore drives away crowds instead of attracting them. What thrill will a game offer if it's no-bearing, as what pretty much is happening right now in the league.

Much as I try to dig up a rationale behind such move, I am at a loss. Just couldn't find one. Help.

Or have we gone nuts?

Of course, it's all right if one or maybe two games turn out to be inconsequential; sometimes they happen.

But what's happening since last week is that many games have become immaterial to the majority of the teams simply because their positions in the next round have been secured much earlier than expected.

The format is the culprit.

Look, teams have only to post a certain number of wins and that's it, they are into the next round. Meaning, a team doesn't have to be very good up to the last day of the eliminations—which is the best reason the league has to be avoided like the SARS virus.

To get to the next round, all a team needs is one spurt of brilliance to get a quick quota of victories and get to the next round. What's left are garbage games rammed down our throats.

It's like a contest with a corrupted rule. It can be likened to a 400-meter run where the first runner to hit the century mark is declared the winner. A Mickey Mouse of a race, isn't it?

What we have right now is an elimination round that eliminates just one team. Then all those who made it start from zero again. So, who needs a sweep of the field when an unblemished record means nothing in the end? Hey, all you need is one stroke of the brush and you can sell that as work of art. Who needs a masterpiece?

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

What you really need now is a master pick: Pick the games you want to win, pick the games you want to lose. Hello, gamblers?

Very idiotic, indeed. And to think this is the PBA, the nation's "Bayan ng Superstars." I guess it won't be long when it would be called the "Bayan of Super Scars."

Drug addiction.

Fil-Ams as Fil-Shams.

The Letter of Credit bedeviling the PBA board of governors.

Name it, the league seems to have it all.

It won't be long, too, I guess when the PBA changes its new slogan, "*Ito ang* game *ko*!" to "*Ito ang gago*!" For, how many among those who made it to the next round have started playing half-heartedly?

In short, teams that have advanced do not care anymore about their final win-loss card because they'll start with a zero record anyway once the second round starts. So, who needs a good standing? A win has become as unimportant as a pair of shoes worn out by time.

It's like seeing someone win in the senatorial elections. Whether first or eighth, the senator's final standing doesn't mean a thing. The senator will always be senator whether the senator finished first or eighth among the eight elected candidates.

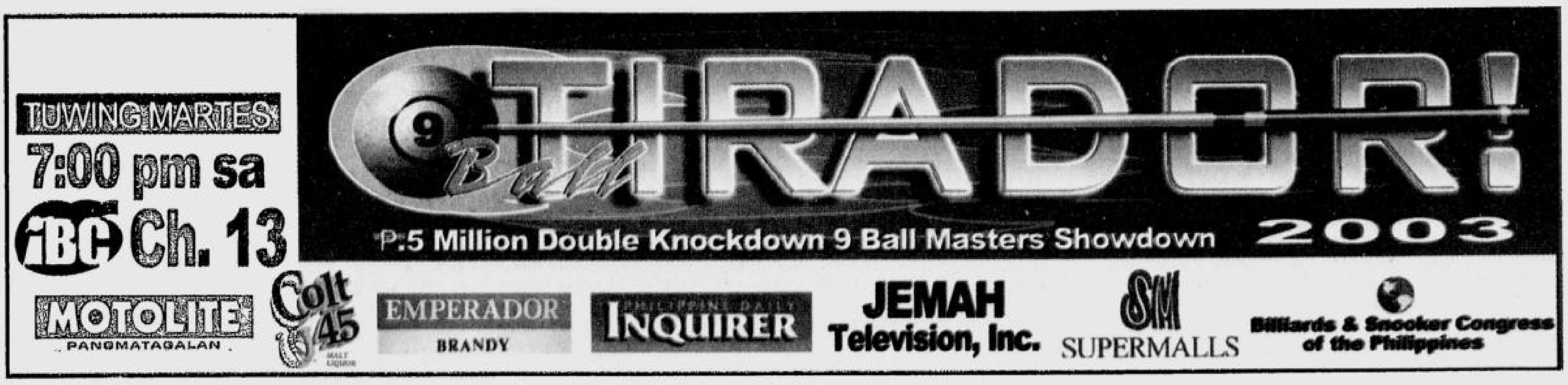
I'm pained seeing such a pain-in-the-ass format in an institution like the PBA, a league so old and very much respected it's almost an abomination seeing it stoop that low.

Why Commissioner Eala allowed it to happen makes it more damning. Instead of advancing progressive ideas, Eala seemed to have just reintroduced an idea so retrogressive it pushed the league 50 years back. What do we have here, a Jurassic Park instead of a Joyous Park? Aren't the younger ones supposed to be always brimming with futuristic moves? Or is Noli Eala, not yet 40, still adjusting to his new position? When will the getting-to-know portion for the lawyer end, so that we can start to see honest-to-goodness changes?

So who needs a format as old as time itself?

It does not only uglify the league by encouraging mediocre games. It also breathes life to game fixers, who find a format riddled with no-bearing games picture perfect for their business.

I seem to hear their own battle cry these days: "Come to our parlor, Noli."



SPORTSWATCH

Winning jockey to meet stewards

SANTOS

KENTUCKY— Monday is Funny Cide's big day—in two places, really. He'll be toasted by horsemen, breeders and politicians in Albany for being the first New York-bred colt to win the Kentucky Derby. Everyone will be there, except winning jockey Jose Santos. Accompanied by his lawyer, the Chilean will be in Louisville for a hearing with Churchill Downs stewards, who spent the weekend examining a photo of him possibly holding something in his hand besides his whip when he crossed the finish line. The inquiry will focus "most particularly on the actions" of Santos at the race, said chief steward Bernie Hettel, who will be joined by stewards Rick Leigh and Jack Middleton. We're hoping Jose will be able to join us later in the day," said Jack Knowlton, managing partner of Sackatoga Stable, which owns Funny Cide. "Here we have a great day planned and we have to deal with this." Funny Cide, a 12-1 shot, beat favorite Empire Maker by 1 3/4 lengths to become the first gelding to win the Derby since 1929. *AP*

Bonifacio-Puno tops Belle Cup

DOMINGO Bonifacio and Edward Puno combined for 153 points to top the Belle Cup golf team championship recently at the Tagaytay Highlands and Midlands courses. Francis Celones and Rey Calpo shared the spotlight by winning two round-trip Northwest Airlines tickets to any US destination in the two-day tournament for members and guests of the two courses. Bonifacio and Puno earlier scored 78 points to bag the overall crown in the Highlands Cup which they used as the springboard to win the overall championship in the three-in-one tournament, the featured event in five club-sponsored championships lined up this year. Celones, who with Calpo were the lucky winners in the raffle during the awards rites, earlier teamed up with Popoy Flores to rule the Group I division of the Belle Cup with 151 points under the Stableford scoring system. Carolina Nielsen and Minerva Jentes reigned supreme in the ladies division with 143 points as they toppled the pairs of Angelita Co-Vinice Godio (137) and Linnel de Villa-Debbie de Villa (134).In the Highlands Cup, Flores and Celones won the Group I class with 77 points with Tecson and Garcia finishing second with 74 and Kit Angeles Chino Raymundo placing third with 73. In the Midlands Cup, Jaime Baustista and Cesar Chiong scored 80 points to win the overall title, while the tandem of Miguel Ozaeta-Eric Luchengco churned out 77 points to rule Group I.

Dela Merced hangs on to lead

DELA MERCED

FEMALE racing sensation Gaby dela Merced continues to hold on to the lead halfway through the premiere production race car series in the SVI Challenge Cup at the Subic International Raceway. In what is by far the most challenging race weekend for her this season, the Petron Ultron race car driver had to start from the second row of the grid, go through a stop-and-go penalty in the morning race and experience getting pinned to the wall in the first lap of the second race. "The weekend was indeed intense, but we managed to pull through," said the pretty 20-year-old college student. Gaby clings to an 11-point lead over ten other drivers after six stages. Dela Merced is being supported by Subic International Hotel, Nike, Allen Isidro Custom Paints, Bigshot Billiards, Oakley, Club Morocco, and Atoy Body Kits.

Aguilar powers team's charge

SUBIC— Oscar Aguilar jumped the gun on his foes and went on to win the 7th and 8th rounds of the Class C category, powering Caltex-Havoline Racing Team's charge in the SVI-Challenge Cup last Sunday at the Subic International Raceway here. Aguilar set the pace in the morning and afternoon races to strengthen his hold of the Class C lead in the 12-leg event. Aguilar, also the captain of the five-man Havoline Racing Team, had an overpowering performance in the morning race by compiling a 31.20.99 clocking to down rival Gaby dela Merced by almost four seconds. Aguilar later combined with teammate Dr. Peewee Mendiola to give the team a 1-2 finish in the afternoon race. Aguilar had a 34.49.39 clocking while Mendiola was almost two seconds behind at 34.51.21. "Oscar had a terrific run which simply underscores Caltex-Havoline Oil's capacity to deliver in circuit racing extremes," said Havoline product manager Paul Familara. Other members of the team, which is also backed by Gatorz Precision Eyewear, San Miguel (Red Horse), Gaspeed Auto Color Craft, AUR automotive, Nodalo's mufflers, Velocity Motors and Auto Trend, are Jody Coseteng (Super A), Nilo Pazcoguin (Super Saloon A) and Arpie Manhit (Novice).

Lapaz, Pang hurdle tennis rivals

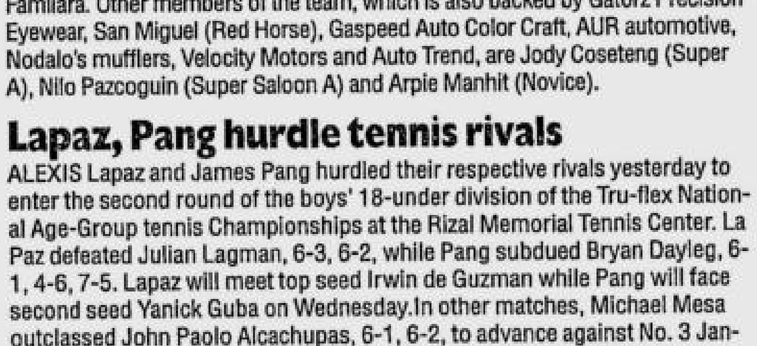
ALEXIS Lapaz and James Pang hurdled their respective rivals yesterday to enter the second round of the boys' 18-under division of the Tru-flex National Age-Group tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. La Paz defeated Julian Lagman, 6-3, 6-2, while Pang subdued Bryan Dayleg, 6-1, 4-6, 7-5. Lapaz will meet top seed Irwin de Guzman while Pang will face second seed Yanick Guba on Wednesday.In other matches, Michael Mesa outclassed John Paolo Alcachupas, 6-1, 6-2, to advance against No. 3 Jandrick de Castro and Hans Prudencio scored a 7-5, 6-1 victory over Miguel Munsayac to advance against No. 5 Lawrence Magaway. First-round winners in the boys'.14-under class were Mark Balce, Shiv Hiranand, Patrick Arevalo, Nico Katigbak, El Santo Santos, Efren Macasinag, Mark Aaron Alcachupas, Raymond Padigos, Martin Ramos and Lorenzo Miguel Mayor.

Spider 5-cocker starts today

MORE than 50 fights will be on tap when the "Spider 5-Cock Derby" begins today at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. Hosted by sportsman Nestor Alcala of Bulacan, the derby is sponsored by Sagupaan B-50 Forten (anti-stress), Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo, Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer and Washout Shampoo from Lakpue Drug Inc. Alcala has invited big-time cockers from Pampanga, Bulacan, Tarlac, Zambales, Pangasinan and Masbate as well as participants from the United Cockers Association of the Philippines (UCAP) and the National Cockers Association (NCA). Meanwhile, scheduled on Thursday is the "Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) 5 – Cock Derby". For details, contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 535-2341 and 534-4110.

Lacson rules Roligon derby

DONG Lacson, one of Iloilo's most prominent gamefowl breeders, finished with a perfect score of 5 wins out of 5 matches to rule the Roligon Mega Cockpit's 226-entry Balikatan 2003 5-Cock Derby. Lacson's entry Dreamcatcher, financed by Kenny Limjoco, fielded a fleet of Albany's and Roundheads bred and raised from the D.L. Assassin Game Farm in Iloilo City. The 3-Day derby (May 6, 8 and 10) was hosted by Rolly Ligon sponsored by Thunderbird Platinum Hi Protein Conditioning Pellets, Vetracin Gold, Bexan-XP and Enertone Ready Mixed Concentrate. Duplicating Lacson's sterling performance are entries Arkus of Elmer Buyco, DDT eagle of Danny Itchon, Rico of Robert Rubin, san Pablo Princess of Bobo Vergara and Regulus of Salvador Leamo. Meanwhile, the annual Magayon Festival 5-Cock Derby of Albay Governor Alfrancis Bichara held May 9 and 10 at the Albay Astrodome in Legazpi City attracted 58 bigtime entries.


SHARPSHOOTERS
Members of the True Weight team brought home the top awards during the recent Gov. Bongbong Marcos Cup in Paoay, Ilocos Norte. From right are Michael Ku (open champion), LJ dela Cruz (open junior champ, Roland Tan (senior open champion), TJ Joson (6th place modified version), Grace Tan (ladies champion) and NAIA Customs arrival division chief Mimel Talusan (1st runner-up, ladies open).

500TH HOMER

Palmeiro sparkles as Rangers prevail

BASEBALL RESULTS

AL—Detroit 9, Tampa Bay 2; Kansas City 8, Baltimore 5; Texas 17, Cleveland 10; Oakland 5, NY Yankees 2; Toronto 4, Anaheim 2; Seattle 7, Chicago White Sox 2; Minnesota 9, Boston 8

NL—Cincinnati 7, Milwaukee 5; Los Angeles 4, Montreal 3; Florida 7, Colorado 2; NY Mets 3, San Diego 2; Arizona 2, Pittsburgh 1; Houston 10, Philadelphia 7; Atlanta 7, San Francisco 3

ARLINGTON, Texas — Texas slugger Rafael Palmeiro hit his 500th career homer in his last chance to get it at home.

Palmeiro hit a three-run homer in the seventh off Cleveland right-hander David Elder to become the second player to reach the milestone this season as the Rangers beat the Indians 17-10 Sunday.

Every member of the 500-homer club eligible for the Hall of Fame has been elected to the shrine, including some of the greatest sluggers ever in Babe Ruth, Ted Williams and Mickey Mantle.

"Obviously I've hit 500 home runs, so I belong in the 500 club," Palmeiro said. "But talk about names like Mantle and Ruth and Williams, I'm not as good as they ever were. Those guys were the greatest of all-time. I've just been able to string together some years and I've been healthy and I've gotten here."

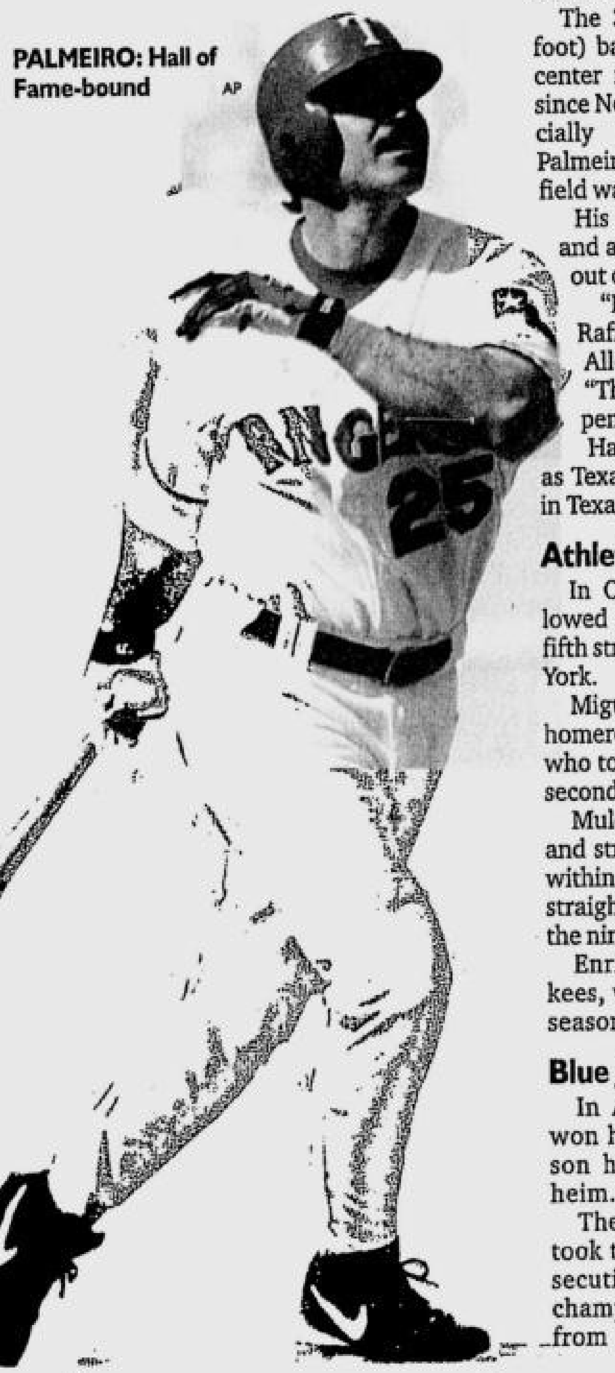
Palmeiro hit No. 500 in the seventh inning in his final at-bat before heading on a six-game road trip. With the crowd standing in anticipation, Palmeiro hit a full-count fastball from David Elder over the right-field fence.

"It felt like a big giant gorilla just jumped off my back," Palmeiro said. "I wanted to do it here. It almost feels like it would have been a big letdown not to."

In other AL games, it was Oakland 5, New York 2; Minnesota 9, Boston 8; Toronto 4, Anaheim 2; Seattle 7, Chicago 2; Kansas City 8, Baltimore 5; and Detroit 9, Tampa Bay 2.

Palmeiro followed Sammy Sosa into the 500-club. Sosa did it last month, making the third time two players have hit the historic homer in the same season. Mickey Mantle and Eddie Mathews did it in 1967, and Harmon Killebrew and Frank Robinson in 1971.

Fireworks exploded in the daylight sky and the crowd broke out into a loud and extended ovation as Palmeiro rounded the bases. Like all of his previous homers, there was no posing and no strutting after the ball left the bat.


PALMEIRO: Hall of Fame-bound AP

The 3-meter by 6-meter (10-foot by 20-foot) banner that has been hanging high in center field, and updated for every homer since No. 495, was flipped over to 500. A specially designed logo commemorating Palmeiro's feat was unveiled on the right-field wall.

His teammates mobbed him at the plate, and as the crowd chanted "Raffy!" he came out of the dugout for a curtain call.

"It's pretty emotional for all of us with Raffy hitting 500 and us getting the win," All-Star shortstop Alex Rodriguez said. "This is the way we all wanted it to happen."

Hank Blalock went 4-for-5 with four RBIs as Texas denied the Indians their first sweep in Texas in 30 years.

Athletics 5, Yankees 2

In Oakland, California, Mark Mulder allowed three hits in eight innings to win his fifth straight start, pitching Oakland past New York.

Miguel Tejada, Ron Gant and Eric Byrnes homered off Andy Pettitte (4-3) for the A's, who took two of three from New York for the second straight weekend.

Mulder (6-1) gave up two runs, walked two and struck out a season-high eight. He came within an inning of throwing his fourth straight complete game. Keith Foulke pitched the ninth for his 10th save.

Enrique Wilson homered for the Yankees, who lost their first road series of the season.

Blue Jays 4, Angels 2

In Anaheim, California, Roy Halladay won his third straight start and Tom Wilson homered to lead Toronto past Anaheim.

The Blue Jays, who have won eight of 10, took two of three to win their second consecutive series against the World Series champions. Toronto swept three games from Anaheim last weekend at home. *AP*

Tanamor leads RP pugs drive

By Roy Luarca

TANAMOR

LIGHT fly Harry Tanamor aims to increase his collection of international medals when he heads the RP-Revicon boxing team leaving tonight to compete in Lithuania and later in Spain and Greece.

Joining the 24-year-old Tanamor, who won gold medals in Azerbaijan and Greece before settling for the silver in the Busan Asian Games last year, are Warlito Parrenas (51 kg), Arlan Lerio (54 kg), Jenebert Pasadre (57 kg), Esmael Bacongon (61 kg) and Florencio Ferrer (64 kg).

The Nationals' first stop will be the 7th A. Socikas international boxing tournament, an Amateur International Boxing Association ranking event, set May 14-17 in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Accompanying the boxers are head coach Patricio Gaspi, assistant coach Alex Arroyo and international referee/judge Mar de Guia.

mateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez is the delegation head of the RP Revicon team being supported by Pacific Heights, the Philippine Sports Commission and outfitted by Accel.

Lopez said the tournaments will be use to assess the boxers' performance and will have a bearing on the composition of the national team to the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games and the Olympic qualifying tournament in Manila in January.

After Lithuania, RP Revicon will proceed to Sevilla, Spain for the Boxam international championships slated May 18-25 and then head for Athens for the 24th Acropolis Cup international tournament set May 28-June 2.

"This team is a combination of old and new faces and we're hopeful that the boxers will put up a creditable performance," said Lopez, who's pinning his hopes on the 5-foot-5 Tanamor.

The coaching staff also expects Lerio, a multi-titled veteran who is returning to action after reaching the second round in the Sydney Olympics, to perform creditably.

Parents to caddie for kids in Canlubang jungolf tour

PARENTS will be given the chance to caddie for their kids for the first and only time in the Samsung Jungolf Tour when the sixth leg is played at the north course of the Canlubang Golf and Country Club in Laguna starting today.

There are a lot of interesting combinations as television host/comedian Vic Sotto carries the bag for daughter Paulina, Luigi Tabuena gets to work with his son Miguel, teaching pro Ed Ardina walks the course with his world champion daughter Dottie and touring pro Mars Pucay will be the caddie this time for his kid in the 54-hole tourney.

The waiver of the caddie rule has paved the way for one of the biggest fields in the Tour as there are 120 boys and girls confirmed entries in the event and they will be vying for the top plums in the five age-group divisions.

The regular co-sponsors of the Samsung Jungolf Tour are Philippine Airlines, Airlift Asia, Air Liquide Phils., Global Lighting and Exito Manufacturing with Golf Pro, makers of new technology tees, coming in as leg sponsor. Pisanti Golf, Bellevue Manila, Third World Eximport, HBW Enterprises, MCCI Corp. and BF Technology are minor sponsors.

Gerry Handog, president of the organizing Jungolf Foundation of the Philippines, said that after a series of tournaments where parents have stayed in the sidelines, they felt it's about time they give them the chance to work with their protegés.

Forest Hills holds appreciation tourney

THE FOREST Hills Golf and Country Club will hold an appreciation golf tournament for sponsors and select media personalities today to kick off the preliminary activities of the club's invitational set Thursday. Global Shelter and TaylorMade adidas are presenting this year's four-day annual invitational with CAP, MRT, Turf Co.-- Club Car, Club Leisure Management Inc., and Rudy Project as major sponsors. Other backers are Lipovitan, former Rep. Gilberto Duavit, TeeMaG Ventures Corp., Philippine Wine Merchants, Body Worx Spa & Fitness Club, Manila Southwoods Manor, Camp John Hay Manor, and Fairways & Bluewater.

VICTORIA'S MAN
Manchester United's David Beckham holds the English Premier League trophy after their 2-1 win over Everton at Goodison Park in Liverpool, Sunday. Beckham is the husband of former Spice Girl Victoria "Posh Spice" Adams. AP

ALL DIGITAL SOUND

AYALA CINEMAS

PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 TILL THERE WAS YOU	1 X-MEN 2	ArtFilm 1 25TH HOUR 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 1 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE 12:40 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20 11:30	THX BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND	2 SO CLOSE (ADVANCE SCREENINGS)	2 X-MEN 2 12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 X-MEN 2 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50, 11:30	2 SO CLOSE (Advance Screenings)
3 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE 1:40 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20 10:30	Onstage ACOUSTIC NIGHT OUT FEAT. SIDE A May 16, 17, 30 & 31	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 PINOCCHIO 12:30, 3:00, 5:30 8:00 10:30	3 X-MEN 2
4 X-MEN 2	4 25TH HOUR		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00 11:20	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
	5 CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 SO CLOSE (Advance Screenings) 12:40 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20 11:30	5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
	6 JOHNNY ENGLISH			
	7 TILL THERE WAS YOU			

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4 GOLD (DTS ES) X-MEN-2
5 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
6 GOLD (SDDS) BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX) X-MEN-2
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9 TILL THERE WAS YOU
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3 BAYARAN

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2 XEREX
3 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) X-MEN-2
5 BAYARAN

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www.clickthecity.com.ph (Alabang) tel 850.4285

1 BAYARAN
2 XEREX
3 X-MEN-2
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
6 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

M Star
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1 X-MEN-2
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU

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X-MEN-2

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1
2 BAYARAN
3

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2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 BAYARAN
4

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3 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUSE MIND
4 BAYARAN
5 XEREX
6 TILL THERE WAS YOU
7 (DTS) X-MEN-2
8 (SDDS) BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
9 (DOLBY) SO CLOSE (SNEAK PREVIEW)

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1 XEREX
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 (SDDS) X-MEN-2
5 BAYARAN
6 (DOLBY) SO CLOSE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
7 (DTS) BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
8 X-MEN 2
9 BOLD STAR

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1 BAYARAN
2 (SDDS) SO CLOSE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 (DTS) X-MEN-2
4 (DOLBY) BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU

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1 TILL THERE WAS YOU
2 XEREX
3 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUSE MIND
4 BAYARAN
5 (SDDS) X-MEN-2

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1 X-MEN-2
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 BAYARAN
4 RESERVE

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1 (DOLBY) X-MEN-2
2 XERFX
3 BAYARAN
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUSE MIND

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1
2

Berma Cinema
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1 TILL THERE WAS YOU
2 X-MEN-2

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1 XEREX
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4 (SDDS) SO CLOSE (SNEAK PREVIEW)
5 CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUSE MIND
6 BAYARAN
7 JOHNNY ENGLISH

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1 X-MEN-2
2 XEREX

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1 BAYARAN
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DTS) X-MEN-2

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1 A MAN APART
2 (DTS) TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DOLBY) X-MEN-2
4 BAYARAN

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2 XEREX
3 (DOLBY) EQUILIBRIUM
4

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2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DOLBY) KANGAROO JACK
4 (DTS) X-MEN-2

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2 (DTS) TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 XEREX

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2 BOLDD STAR
3 (DTS) TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 X-MEN-2

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2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DTS) X-MEN-2
4 BAYARAN
5 NATIONAL SECURITY

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1 BAYARAN
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 X-MEN-2

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1 X-MEN-2
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 BAYARAN

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1 JOHNNY ENGLISH
2 XEREX
3 (DTS) TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 (DOLBY) X-MEN-2

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1 (DTS) RESERVE
2 (DTS) RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1 BOLD STAR
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 XEREX
2 X-MEN-2
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 JOHNNY ENGLISH

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1 (DOLBY EX) EQUILIBRIUM
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DTS ES) X-MEN-2
4 XEREX

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1 TILL THERE WAS YOU
2 A MAN APART
3 (DOLBY) PHONE BOOTH
4 (DTS) X-MEN-2

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4 XEREX
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6 TILL THERE WAS YOU
7 BAYARAN
8 JOHNNY ENGLISH

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1 TILL THERE WAS YOU
2 SO CLOSE
3 X-MEN 2
4 XEREX
5 X-MEN 2
6 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
7 CONFESSIONS OF A ...
8 SOULKEEPER
9 BAYARAN
10 TILL THERE WAS YOU

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1 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2 JOHNNY ENGLISH
3 EQUILIBRIUM
4 X-MEN 2
5 A MAN APART
6 BAYARAN
7 CONFESSIONS OF A ...
8 TILL THERE WAS YOU
9 X-MEN 2
10 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
11 XEREX
12 SO CLOSE

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2 SO CLOSE
3 CONFESSIONS OF A ...
4 X-MEN 2
5 SOULKEEPER
6 X-MEN 2
7 BAYARAN
8 PINOCCHIO
9 TILL THERE WAS YOU
10 JOHNNY ENGLISH
11 XEREX
12 TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM MEGAMALL
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1 X-MEN 2
2 SO CLOSE
3 X-MEN 2
4 CONFESSIONS OF A ...
5 PINOCCHIO
6 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
7 BAYARAN
8 TILL THERE WAS YOU
9 TILL THERE WAS YOU
10 JOHNNY ENGLISH
11 SOULKEEPER
12 XEREX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2 X-MEN 2
3 XEREX
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 JOHNNY ENGLISH
6 CONFESSIONS OF A ...
7 SO CLOSE
8 X-MEN 2

SM SOUTHMALL
8088888

1 SOULKEEPER
2 CONFESSIONS OF A ...
3 X-MEN 2
4 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
5 PINOCCHIO
6 X-MEN 2
7 TILL THERE WAS YOU
8 SO CLOSE
9 XEREX
10 BAYARAN

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1 X-MEN 2
2 SOLARIS
3 ANGER MANAGEMENT
4 JAILBIRDS
5 XEREX
6 BAYARAN
7 TILL THERE WAS YOU
8 X-MEN 2

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1 JAILBIRDS
2 CLOSED
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 KANGAROO JACK
5 X-MEN 2
6 ANGER MANAGEMENT
7 CLOSED
8 BAYARAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 X-MEN 2
2 A MAN APART
3 PHONE BOOTH
4 BAYARAN
5 RING 2
6 TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1 BAYARAN
2 X-MEN 2
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 CONFESSIONS OF A ...

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 X-MEN 2
2 XEREX
3 TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 BAYARAN

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1 X-MEN 2
2 X-MEN 2
3 WISHMASTER 4
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 ANGER MANAGEMENT
6 KANGAROO JACK

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1 X-MEN 2
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 BAYARAN
4 X-MEN 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

1 SOLARIS
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 ANGER MANAGEMENT
4 X-MEN 2

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
633-0976

1 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
11:40 FS/12:10 MF/2:20/4:30/
10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:40 END

2 X2: X-MEN UNITED
11:10 FS/11:40 MF/2:30/
10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:20 END

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THX X-MEN2
12:30 LMF,3:30, 6:30, 9:30 LMF, 11:50 END
2 X-MEN2
3 BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4 PINOCCHIO
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
6 CONFESSIONS DANGEROUS MIND
7 SOUL KEEPER
8 BAYARAN
9 XEREX
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Ermita 536 -7809- 12

1 X-MEN 2
2 SOUL KEEPER
3 BAYARAN
4 BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
5 PINOCCHIO
6 TILL THERE WAS YOU
7 CONFESSIONS DANGEROUD MIND

Metro East - Marcos hway 682- 8193 / 8280

1 BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2 X-MEN 2
3 XEREX
4 CONFESSIONS DANGEROUS MIND
5 X-MEN 2
6 TILL THERE WAS YOU
7 JOHNY ENGLISH
8 BAYARAN

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1 X- MEN 2
2 BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
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5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
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7 ANGER MANAGEMENT
8 BAYARAN

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1 XEREX
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 X-MEN 2
4 BAYARAN

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp. (045)875-1927 (045)961-5270

1 X-MEN2
2 PHONE BOOTH
3 BAYARAN
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 RING 2
6 A MAN APART

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1 X-MEN 2
2 BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
3 BAYARAN
4 CONFESSIONS DANGEROUS MIND
5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
6 XEREX

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1 X- MEN 2
2 A MAN APART
3 BAYARAN
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 XEREX

Bacolod 441- 0453 / 0459

1 X-MEN 2
2 TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 XEREX
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT
5 KANGAROO JACK
6 SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE

Iloilo 336- 8077 - 78

1 X-MEN2
2 ANGER MANAGEMENT
3 KANGAROO JACK
4 TILL THERE WAS YOU
5 BAYARAN
6 JAIL BIRDS

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Antic view of life

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

JUDY Ann Santos benefits a lot from being directed by **Joyce Bernal** in her latest starrer "Till There Was You." Bernal is able to help Judy Ann edit out many of the *pa*-cute, *pakilig* tricks that she has been using for too many years now.

The character she plays in her new film is still kooky, but no longer pushes her signature screen image to the point of satiety.

A good thing, too, since the actress is already well into her 20s, an age during which neo-**Maricel Soriano** wannabes should think of less outrageously madcap things to do.

Thus, in "Till There Was You," Judy Ann is cast as an ambitious young college graduate who wants to make her fortune abroad, but first needs to earn P60,000 to be able to work in New Zealand.

Her best bet for making that kind of money at the moment is to agree to pretend to be the mother of a little girl who's the child of a taciturn young lawyer (**Piolo Pascual**) with a huge psychological chip on his shoulder.

Fact is, the little girl's mother has flown the coop, but the cute tyke had been made to believe otherwise. Piolo needs Judy Ann around to give his darling daughter the sense of family and being loved that he feels she urgently needs to grow up normally.

At first, Judy Ann regards the assignment as just a job, and she tackles it professioanlly. Predictably, however she soon finds herself falling for her "husband"—who, however, turns out to be quite a klutz when it comes to emotional reciprocation, no thanks to the problems he has with his lawyer-father (**Ronaldo Valdez**).

It turns out that Ronaldo has been a lousy dad, so Piolo has had a bad role model to learn from. Thus, he can't make Judy Ann and "their" daughter truly happy, since he's a miserable mess himself.

We know that Piolo has acquired a solid reputation as a sensitive young actor, but he's pretty unrelievedly sullen in this production, so his performance lacks excitement and energy.

To make things worse, the bad father-son relation that's central to his character's angst is blithely resolved in a very short scene, so Piolo can't really sink his teeth into the resolution of his all-important conflict.

So, the film ends up as Judy Ann's vehicle more than anything else. The child actress who plays Piolo's daughter also benefits from her substantial exposure in this movie, except for her improbable ability to spout words that are much too multi-syllabic for her tender age.

Ultimately, however, Joyce Bernal's direction comes off best in this production, enlivening and informing it with her antic view of life, and her ability to make stars like Judy Ann Santos confident enough to drop the distracting antics that no longer work for them.

Finally, the production should be credited for giving good but generally underutilized actors like Ronaldo Valdez and **Jennifer Sevilla** a chance to strut their thespic stuff.

On the debit side, however, Judy Ann's character is given a background (only girl in a family of rambunctions boys) that's too reminiscent of **Aiko Melendez**'s character background in the film she made with **Aga Muhlach** some years ago. So, the bloom is off the rose.

DID YOU KNOW...

Rachel Alejandro and boyfriend **Lee Robin Salazar** were at the newly opened Trio Restaurant at The Fort in the Global City. They were in casual getups as they sat down to dinner at the fine dining place.

Joey Reyes ...

From page A32

"The persons felt alluded to and they became open to innuendo," said in her letter. "They have had to spend time setting facts right. Their peace has been disturbed."

Jo-Ann admitted the blind item had no basis and came from tainted sources.

"Our own source has been fed the wrong information by parties whose intentions could well cause harm." she said. "I must now inform all Yes! readers that Blind Item No. 1 is not to be believed."

She said Yes! is no longer running its "Blind Items" section, which ran from March to May.

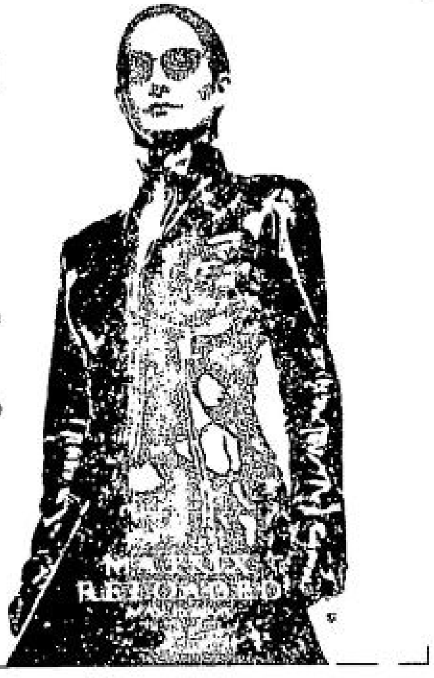
"The section will have to go down in this magazine's history as its short-lived-and sorry experiment in catering to popular taste," she said.

"My last word on the section back then, in fact, went this way: 'Still, a word of caution: Blind items are blind items precisely because no one will go on record to admit them. Therefore, readers are allowed to think we are the blind leading the blind on this one.'

"It seems now that the cautionary line was meant, most of all, for me."

She said: "I wish to apologize, with all my heart, to the persons who have suffered distress as a result of Blind Item No. 1. We never intended to cause any harm.

"I would also like to assure everyone–both celebrity and non-celebrity that Yes! may make maddening mistakes such as this, but never, never, will there be method or malice to the madness."



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OPENS ON MAY 15 AT
AYALA CINEMAS
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

X-MEN 2 P13 12:30,3:20, 6:10,9:00	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE P13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND P13 12:50,3:05,5:20,7:35,9:50
X-MEN 2 P13 1:40,4:30, 7:20,10:10	PINOCCHIO GP 12:10,2:30,4:50, 7:10,9:30	SO CLOSE P13 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

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EVIL HUNGERS FOR YOUR SOUL!
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Released thru Solar Films
AN ANCIENT RELIC UNLEASHES THE KING OF DEMONS TO PREY ON HUMANS DOOMED TO HELL!

THEATRE-MALL
GREENHILLS
DOLBY DIGITAL
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 X-MEN 2 11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40 P13	CINEMA 2 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE 11:40, 1:55, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40 P13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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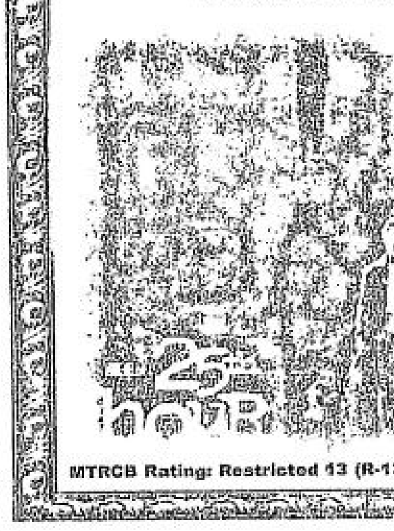
so close
GLORIETTA 4
GREENBELT 3
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
May 12 (Mon) & 13 (Tue)



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& GLORIETTA 4
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barry pepper philip seymour hoffman
rosario dawson anna paquin brian cox

The 25th Hour depicts the last day of freedom for a young man before he begins serving a seven-year jail term for drug dealing. Prowling through the city until dawn with his two close male friends and his girlfriend, he is forced to re-examine his life and how he got himself into his predicament, which leads to a shocking, disturbing finale.

"A superb film."
– Michael Wilmington, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

"...the first great 21st century movie about a 21st century subject",
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"Lee has crafted that rarity in filmmaking: a movie we need, right now."
– Ann Hornaday, WASHINGTON POST

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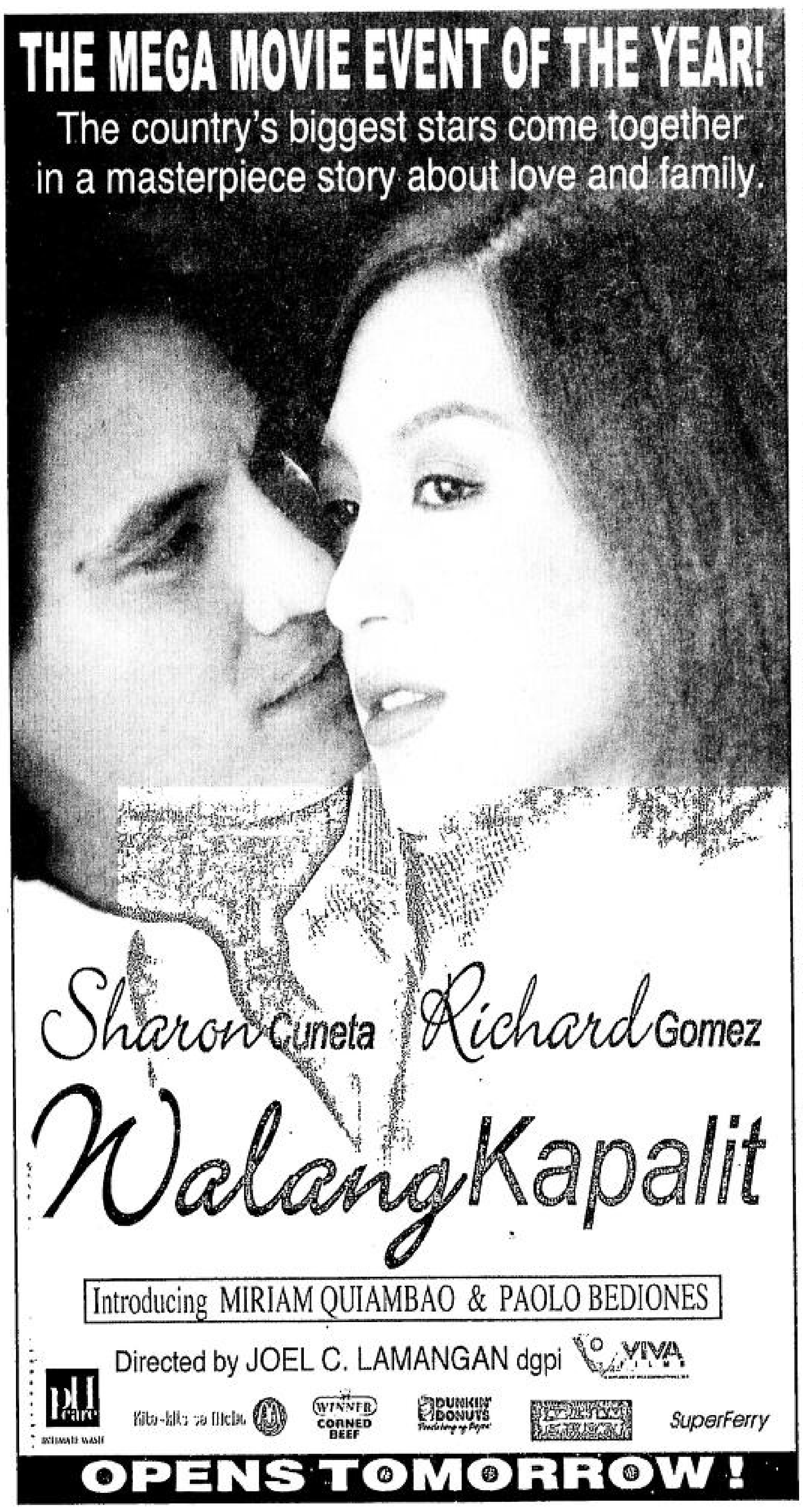

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She haunted you after she died.
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DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

ANGELU de Leon, TJ Manotoc and I had the time of our lives taping the pilot episode of our new show, "CelebrityDATcom," at Hard Rock Café, which will start airing on Thursday, May 22, on IBC-13, 9:30-10:30 p.m.

I have hosted, either as the main host or as a segment host, several show biz talk shows before such as "Movie Magazine," "Channel S," "N.O.W.," "Showbiz Lingo," "The Buzz" as well as kiddie shows and a medical show. I even tried newscasting in "Newswatch Junior Edition," which was my first foray into television.

Today I am the sum total of all the experiences and lessons from those previous shows. But just like anything else in life, there's always something new to learn, especially in the field of talk shows. As my favorite talk show host and friend of perpetual help **Boy Abunda** told me once, *"Kahit sa putik may makikita kang ginto."*

Indeed even when an interview subject gives you monosyllabic answers, there's still some gems you can pick up if you really listen closely. Sometimes it's not what they say but what they do not say that hits me.

Thanks, Mom

Speaking of lessons I've learned in the talk show circuit, my mom's ("the mother of all talk shows," as she's been dubbed) countless tips remain unparalleled in my book. You'll be privy to all this when you catch our one-on-one interview in "CelebrityDATCom's" first episode.

Due to time constraints, our interview was cut short just when it was getting juicy. But there will be a part 2 of that dream interview.

Truth to tell, my mom has politely declined many invitations to be interviewed on other talk shows. As she says, "I'm beyond show biz." That's why I'm so grateful that she agreed to appear on my new show with TJ and Angelu. It's not that she was obliged to just because I happen to be her daughter. I know she wanted to be around to show me her support. Her presence was the only adrenaline shot I needed to perk me up for the initial telecast.

I know that even when she was the one who asked me to take over the hosting chores on "Movie Magazine" many years ago, deep inside her she wished that I had pursued my dream to become an interpreter in the United Nations.

Not to be missed

That dream may or may not be fulfilled but it doesn't bother me much. Foregoing one dream to be able to continue my mom's incredible legacy in show biz is more than enough compensation. It's the least I can do to give something back to all the people whose lives she has not only touched but changed for the better.

TJ and Angelu also have very revealing and candid interviews which you must not miss. TJ's GMA-7 colleagues **Paolo Bediones** and **Love Añover** sort of "roasted" him but TJ was game.

My ABS-CBN colleagues were not around but I know that in future shows I can count on them to appear as guests on the show.

Allow me to thank my bosses and segment producer **Eric** of "Magandang Umaga Bayan" for allowing me to expand my horizons. I'm happy that even if I'll be hosting "CDC" every Thursday, I will still be a part of "M.U.B." as movie reviewer. There will be exciting changes in my "M.U.B." segment soon because I'll be going on location to interview stars in the middle of their shooting.

Thanks, thanks

Back to "CDC." I'd like to thank my all-time favorite band/kindred spirits, True Faith, especially vocalist **Medwin Marfil**, for arranging the music of and singing the theme of the show. And endless thanks to IBC-13 staff for making the first taping day such a breeze. Special thanks, too, to my sparring partner **Goulee Gorospe** and beloved friend **Cerena Masu** for my outfits on the show and for being my source of laughter and love.

If you somehow enjoy reading "Dollywood," do catch me with TJ and Angelu and judge if I'm better read or heard. Hopefully, you'll say both.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

Birds of the Same Feather flies again in reunion show

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

SHOW TIME

FOR jazz lovers who were already listening to good jazz music in the late 1970s, the roads often led to the Birds of the Same Feather at the Timog Avenue-Tomas Morato rotunda.

The place was small and unassuming, put up by businessman and jazz lover Serafin Pua and some partners, but the small place attracted both the well-heeled and the bohemian crowds who shared a common love for the music.

During those days, over Birds' famous chicken wings, artists like Jacqui Magno, Louie Reyes, Eddie Katindig and Richard Merk regaled the crowd with the first local strains of jazz fusion, the kind performed by popular artists at that time such as Seawind, Flora Purim, Chuck Mangione and Spyro Gyra.

Birds of the Same Feather became an oasis not only for music lovers but also for the artists who were searching for a place to stretch their creative talents. Session musicians such as pianists Rey Cristobal and Bobby Enriquez, guitarists Rudy Lozano and Menchu Apostol and bass player Sonny Tolentino were just some of the artists who regularly came to jam at Birds.

Birds of the Same Feather became so popular that the foreign luminaries in the world of jazz and rhythm and blues would make it a point to go to Birds of the Same Feather and jam with local musicians. Among them were Seawind, Angela Bofill, Tom Scott, Ronnie Laws, Noel Pointer, Patty Austin, Alphonse Mouzon, Al Jarreau and the Manhattan Transfer.

It was with a heavy heart, therefore, that artists and patrons accepted the news that Birds of the Same Feather had to close down after five years of providing beautiful music.

CIRCA '70s. Bong Peñera (left) with Richard Merk.

BIRDS VETERANS. Richard Merk (left), Jacqui Magno and Eddie Katindig.

Since then, artists often talked about reviving Birds or at least having a reunion of the Birds artists, but problems such as logistics and scheduling nipped plans in the bud.

But Richard Merk, who has since put up his own Merk's Bar and Bistro at Greenbelt 3, remained firm in his resolve to finally hold the reunion. And the reunion will finally happen on May 14 and 28 at Merk's when some of the artists come together to bring back the good old days of Birds of the Same Feather.

Topbilling the reunion concert are Eddie Katindig, Jacqui Magno, Merk, Tonette Buizon and Brother Wayne.

Magno, who performed when the bar opened in 1977, says it was not difficult to convince her to take part in the reunion concert because Birds is part of her history as an artist.

"That place was special for me because that was where I grew up as a jazz artist," she said. "I would call that period the advent of fusion jazz."

Katindig, who spent the better part of his career in the United States, says he was willing to come back to the Philippines for the special two-night gig because of the fond memories that he has of the place.

"The place provided us a place where we could be free to play the music that we liked," Katindig said. "I think we were the ones who started fusion jazz."

Merk hopes the reunion concert would introduce to today's generation the kind of jazz that people of the 1970s enjoyed. It is an opportunity, he says, for people to bring back the good old days when good music was a main item on the menu.

NEW COMPANY OF ACTORS
Wings Entertainment, headed by its founder-president Francis O. Villacorta (extreme right, standing), recently launched its company of actors. On Saturday afternoons, the company is involved in improv/scene study sessions facilitated by Villacorta. The actors are Robert Correa, Hannah Evangelista, Jas Garcia, Alda Lou Buslon, Faith Hizon, Karen O'Hara, Lanvin Anthony and Rachelle Anne Terry. Wings Entertainment is also holding its summer acting workshop until May 31. For details, call 524-8454, 0917-8415311 or 0917-7921742. Also lined-up is "The Film Forum," in June at the PICC. There will be lectures on the history of Philippine movies, the early Filipino filmmakers, Filipino film and Philippine politics, and the history of world cinema. There will be a filmmaker's series that will feature studies and discussions on the films of Marilou Diaz-Abaya, Lino Brocka and Mel Chionglo.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	XEREX
Ali 2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
Ali 3	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
Ali 4	X-MEN 2
Ali 5	CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
Ali 6	BAYARAN
Ali 7	JOHNNY ENGLISH

FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS

Farmers 1	X-MEN 2
Farmers 2	XEREX

ARANETA COLISEUM

MAY 16	ALLAN K CONCERT
MAY 17	NORA AUNOR CONCERT
MAY 18	PBA GAMES

ELEPHANT WORLD
FUN RIDES
TAGADISCO • VIKING SHIP
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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	PUNLA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	PUNLA
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	TILL THERE WAS YOU
B	BAYARAN
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-2	BAYARAN
CINEMA-3	XEREX
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA-6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-7	A MAN APART
CINEMA-8	BOLDSTAR
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	BRINGING THE HOUSE DOWN
CINEMA-12	PINOCCHIO
CINEMA-14	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-15	CONFESSION OF DANGEROUS MIND

LORES

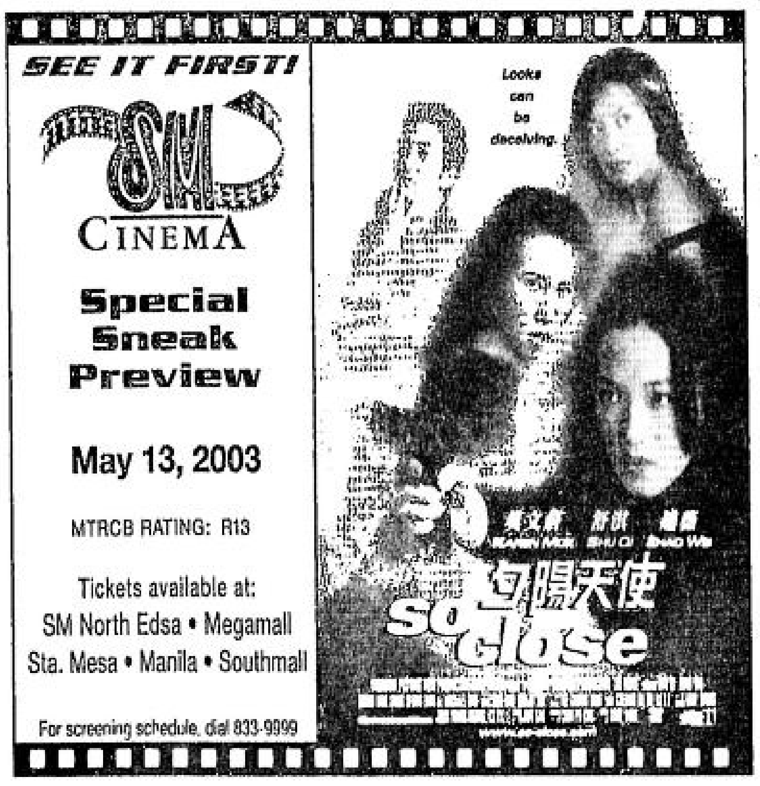
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

CINEMA 1	XEREX
CINEMA 2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA 3	X-MEN
CINEMA 4	TILL THERE WAS YOU

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA



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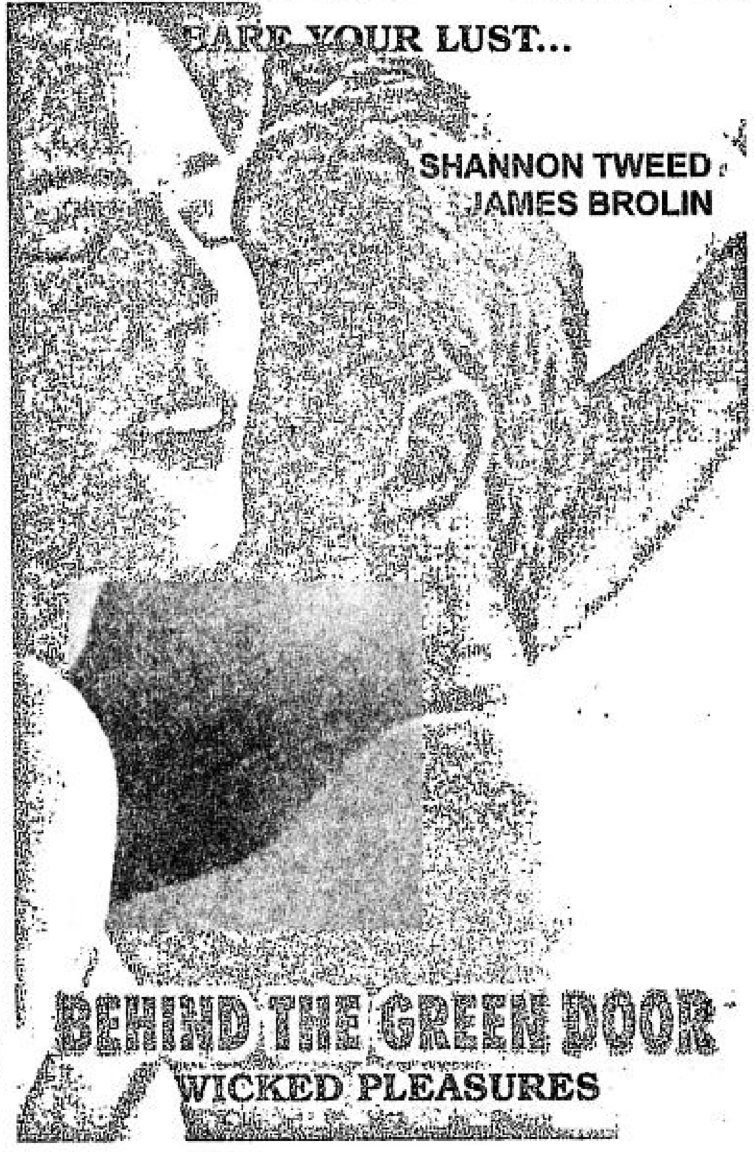

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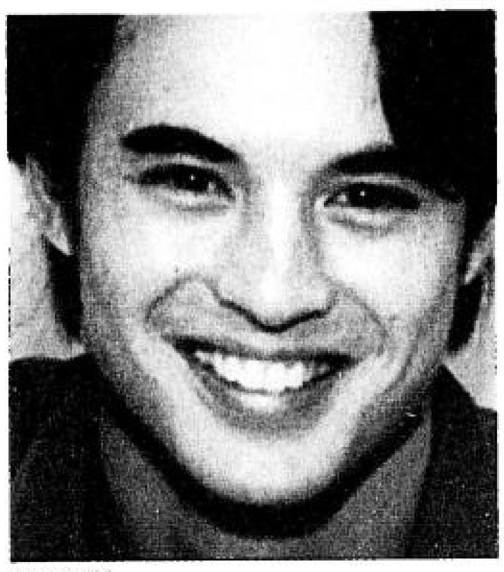
Pops, 'in search of joy,' admits Australian holiday with Brad

By Leah Salterio



TURVEY

"LIFE is short. We all need to find the simple things that give joy to our hearts, all of us. Remember that."

With that and other text messages, Pops Fernandez confirmed that she is indeed in the Gold Coast in Australia vacationing with her rumored boyfriend, Australian model Brad Turvey.

"It's no secret that I'm in Australia," Pops said in one of her text messages.

"Even Martin knows I'm here," she added, referring to her ex-husband and father of her two sons, singer Martin Nievera.

Pops sent the text messages last Tuesday, May 6, the very day the INQUIRER Entertainment article, "Pops, 'boyfriend' Brad together in Australia," came out in this section.

Brad's manager in Manila, Paolo Bustamante, said Pops and Brad left together two weeks ago for their Australian vacation. Brad is visiting his parents in the Gold Coast.

In fact, Paolo said, he and Geoff Rodriguez, formerly of the Powerboys, were supposed to go with the "couple," but Paolo failed to get a visa in time for the trip.

Geoff, whose real name is Geoff Briz and who is also Australian, had wanted to visit his dad, but the latter came to Manila instead, according to Paolo.

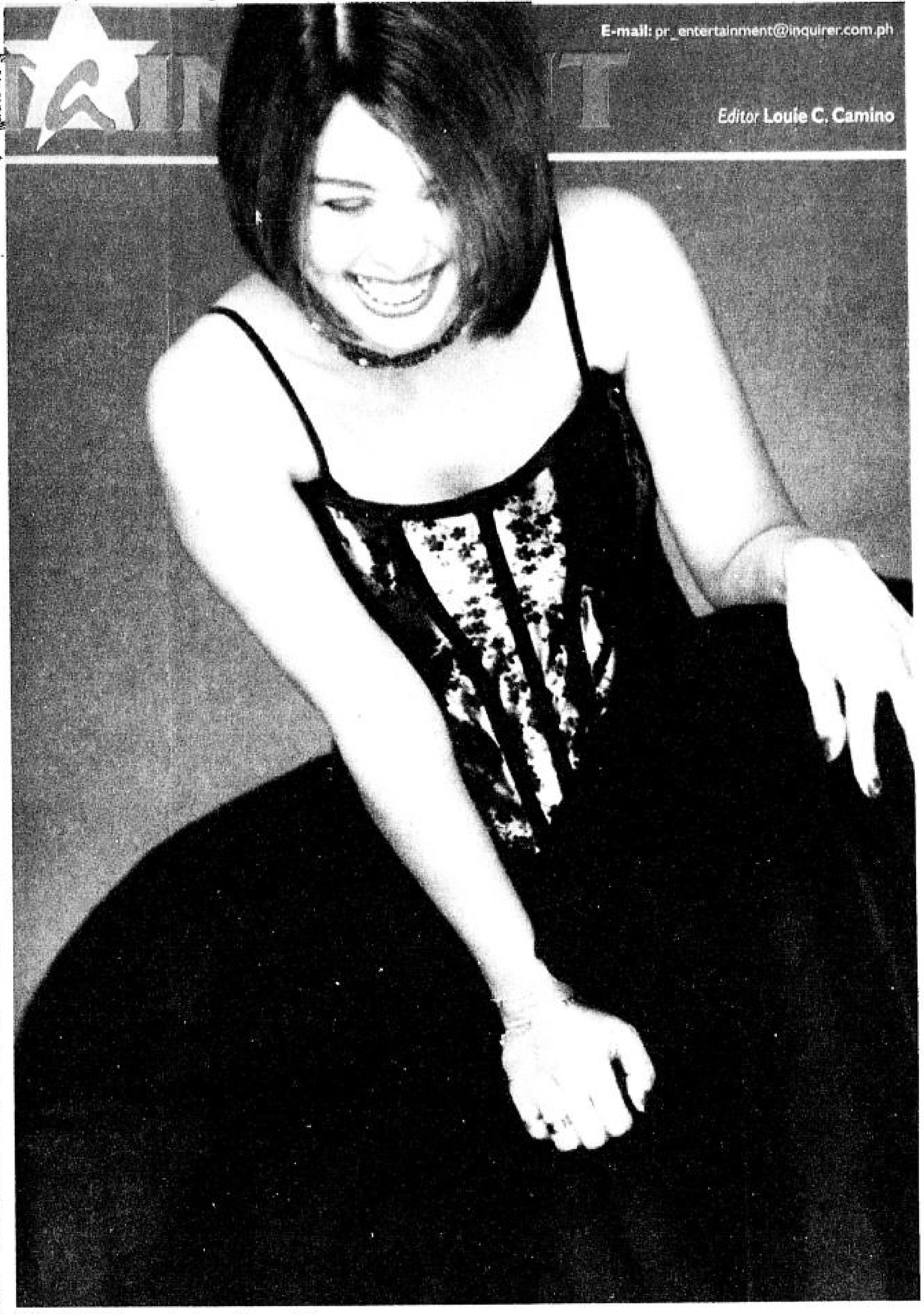
Paolo said Brad was supposed to return last Friday, May 9, but the young man's mom insisted that he stay in the Gold Coast for Mother's Day last Sunday.

Pops and Brad are expected back in Manila early this week.

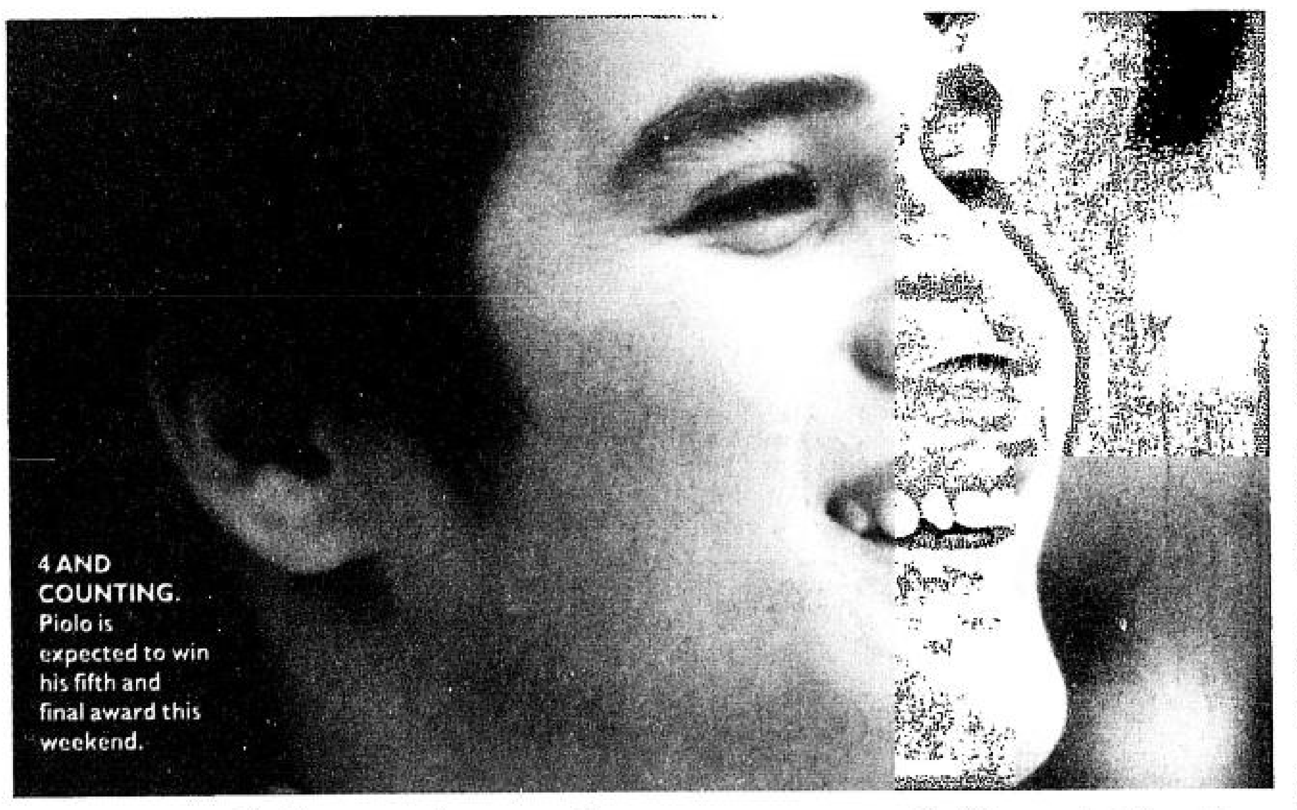
In her text messages, Pops also asked, "What's new in Manila, aside from Brad and me?"

When told how Martin negatively reacted to the ABS-CBN airing of the two-part TV special of their Araneta Coliseum reunion concert, produced by Maxi-Media, Pops responded, "ABS-CBN owns the TV right to the concert because Maxi-Media sold it to them. I think they can do whatever they want with the special, since the producers sold it to them. That's their job. I guess they figured it would be the last time they'd have Martin and Pops on ABS-CBN."

When Pops returns, she will be seen on her new TV show on GMA 7, the concept of which is being finalized now.



HAS POPS Fernandez found joy again?



4 AND COUNTING. Piolo is expected to win his fifth and final award this weekend.

More 'blessings' expected for Piolo

By Remy M. Umerez
Contributor

WILL Piolo Pascual, as expected by many people, win the season's final best supporting acting award from the Urian and claim a grand slam?

"*Sobrang* blessings *na ito 'pag nagkatotoo*," sighed Piolo, who this year has already won four awards for his performance in Chito Roño's "Dekada '70," and who may win his fifth come Saturday during the Gawad Urian awards night.

During the press conference for Star Cinema's "Till There Was You" a couple of days before the Famas Awards night, we asked Piolo if he would attend an awards night even if he felt his chances of winning were slim.

"I would love to attend, win or lose, because being nominated is almost like winning already," said the actor who would go on to win the Famas best supporting actor trophy two nights later. "Only work will prevent me from attending, which happened during the Film Academy of the Philippines awards night. I was in Baguio taping an episode of 'Maalaala Mo Kaya.' *Gusto ko talagang humabol* and capture the exciting moment *at baka ako ang palaring manalo*. I felt sad when my name was called and I wasn't there to accept the award."

Aside bringing home the Famas and the FAP trophies for his work in the Chito Roño movie, Paolo also took the best supporting actor honors from the Philippine Movie Press Club Star Awards and the Manila Film Festival last December, where "Dekada '70" was a contender.

Applauded

It should be noted that most of the other awards given by the FAP raised a howl of protest, but not a whimper or whisper was heard in connection with Piolo's winning. At the Famas Awards, too, the best actress award for sex starlet Aleck Bovick was ridiculed and otherwise figuratively booed, but Piolo's award, again, was roundly applauded and welcomed.

Now, Piolo will have to top his performance as the angry young man Jiles Bartolome in the Roño movie based on the famous novel by Lualhati Bautista. But his latest portrayal is lightweight stuff compared to his winning work. He attempts to display the nuances of fatherhood in the romantic comedy "Till There Was You," which reunites him with his screen sweetheart Judy Ann Santos, directed by Joyce Bernal as Star Cinema's 10th anniversary treat as well as Mother's Day offering.

In the screenplay by Dindo Perez and Mel del Rosario, the country's most popular actor today plays Albert, who finds his hands full as the father of a baby girl as a result of a one-night stand. While carrying his crying baby during a bus ride, he sits next to a stranger, Joanna (Judy Ann), who is instantly attracted to the baby. She accidentally leaves behind her picture, which Albert later tells his daughter is the picture of her missing mother. He sees Joanna again and convinces her to pretend she is the child's mom and his wife. Joanna agrees, for a price, not even dreaming that such an arrangement could change her life completely.

"Direk Joyce has a way of convincing me that no scene is hard to do as long as you remain focused," says the most sought-after actor in show biz. "She is open to suggestions. If she thinks we have suggested a better punchline, for example, *iyon ang gagamitin niya.*"

The truth

As many people will have seen by now, "Till There Was You" features a bed scene where Judy Ann and Piolo engage in a long kiss, which definitely will make their fans wish that the onscreen relationship is for real.

During the press con, the two stars were asked for the nth time about the truth about the Piolo-Judy Ann relationship. An added query was whether Juday is capable of loving a man who already has a child with another woman. The actress said it wouldn't really matter to her. In real life, Piolo has a son from a previous relationship.

To the oft-repeated questions about him and Judy Ann, Piolo replied, "We are not committed to each other. And I agree with what Juday said that we should leave everything to Cupid."

Wonder what Cupid thinks?

Joey Reyes directs another 'risky' movie

HE MAY have created controversial movies such as "Live Show," but director **Jose Javier Reyes** is also capable of directing heartwarming family dramas "to bring back audiences to the theaters and make them appreciate good movies again."

In 2000, Joey directed "Sugatang Puso," which starred **Lorna Tolentino, Christopher de Leon, Cherie Gil** and **Patrick Garcia.** The film reaped critical acclaim when it was shown as one of the official entries in the 2000 Metro Manila Film Festival.

Joey believes a dramatic movie can be made without filling it with hysteria, slapping or hair-pulling scenes. It is also possible to make a dramatic movie without any love scenes, he says.

"Sugatang Puso" is a simple, moving story about family and feelings. Joey weaves a similar storyline in "Anghel sa Lupa," the Mother's Day offering of Regal Entertainment. "Angel sa Lupa" is about the intense love a mother and son feel for each other, the kind of love that survives even death.

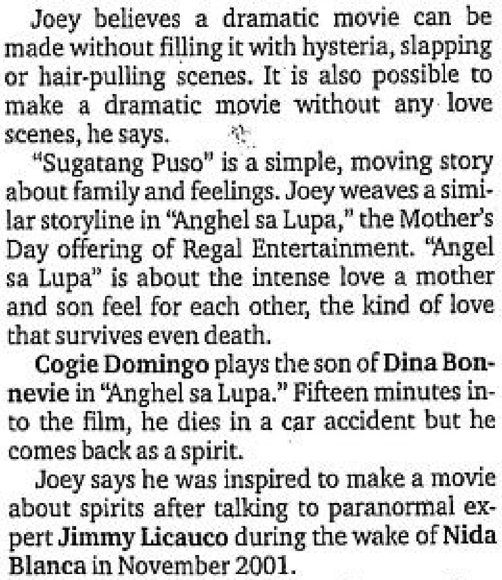
Cogie Domingo plays the son of **Dina Bonnevie** in "Anghel sa Lupa." Fifteen minutes into the film, he dies in a car accident but he comes back as a spirit.

Joey says he was inspired to make a movie about spirits after talking to paranormal expert **Jimmy Licauco** during the wake of **Nida Blanca** in November 2001.

"I was asking him about mediums and lost souls to find out who really killed her (Nida)," Joey shares. "I realized that even when somebody dies, he's still with us because his love will remain. There's really no loss, except for the physical presence.

"I want to treat spirits as normal people who move around us. I believe my dad and my brother are constantly around me."

In the movie, Cogie is seen guarding his mom, in accordance with a pledge he made to his dad (**Ramon Recto**).



DRAMA WITHOUT hysteria is possible, says "Anghel sa Lupa" director Joey Javier Reyes.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

Paolo Ballesteros plays Cogie's angel. While roaming on earth, Cogie meets another "ghost," played by **Jiro Manio**, who starred in "Bagong Buwan," "Magnifico" and "La Vida Rosa."

Joey says "Anghel sa Lupa" was also inspired by **Alice Sebold**'s best-selling novel, "The Lovely Bones."

"This film is not a scream-fest because even if it's about ghosts, there's nothing horrifying or suspenseful about it," the director says. "There's no special effects. It's a love story between a family and a spirit."

Before filming started, Joey told his lead stars that they should do a drama where the audience, not the actors, would cry.

Joey says he is aware that the plot of "Anghel sa Lupa" is a box-office risk.

"Everything is a risk," he maintains. "This is an enlightening and heartwarming story. I like simple and really human stories. I was crying while I was shooting this film. The story assures that there's much importance in love in a time of great hate."

Joey chose to film "Anghel sa Lupa" based on his own screenplay.

"My mom comes from a family of *espiritistas*, so I know what they do," he allows.

Last year, he directed a remake of **Elwood Perez**'s "Paraisong Parisukat," based on the one-act play by the late **Orlando Nadres.** He also megged "Nine Mornings," starring **Donita Rose** and **Piolo Pascual.**

The other movies in Joey's mind include stories about the friendship of two poor boys, and the migration of teachers in search of better jobs.

"I want to do another 'Live Show' even if the first one was banned," he says. "It's not pornography. The reason it was banned was politics."

Jo-Ann apologizes

YES! magazine editor in chief **Jo-Ann Q. Maglipon** wrote a letter of apology for the blind item which came out in the magazine's April 2003 issue.

The apology is actually Jo-Ann's Editor's Note in Yes! magazine's June issue, which is still in the production stage.

"Blind Item No. 1," which referred to a beauty queen-actress married to a popular actor, has caused certain people terrible distress, according to Jo-Ann.

JOEY/A30

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Gov't seen pushing fuel tax increase

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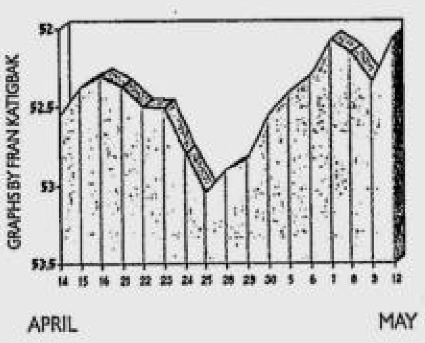


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 52.05 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 12, 2003

¥ 116.38 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 12, 2003

GOLD: $350.50-351.00

per ounce Hong Kong, May 12, 2003

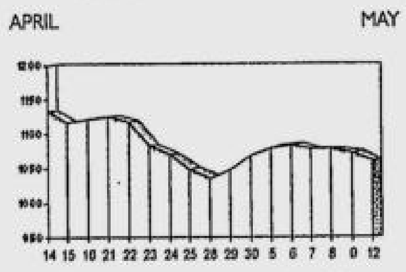
STOCK MARKET

Shares down 1.11%

SHARE prices closed 1.11 percent lower yesterday in the absence of any strong supporting leads, dealers said.

"It's a wait-and-see ballgame. Investors see no reason to come in at the moment after the index failed to breach the 1,080 resistance level," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 11.86 points to 1,061.40.

Turnover volume rose to 525.48 million shares but value fell to P262.8 million compared with 261.2 million shares worth P301.54 million traded on Friday.

"The market is consolidating in the absence of strong leads," said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

He said investors shrugged off Wall Street's gains Friday and the inclusion of Philippine index heavyweights Globe Telecom Inc. and Jollibee Foods Corp. in the Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) index of Philippine stocks.

"The MSCI re-weighting was good news for Globe Telecom and Jollibee, but there's no liquidity in the market. Investors are waiting for more first-quarter results," he added.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. closed unchanged at P402.50, as was Globe Telecom at P570. Jollibee was steady at P15.75. San Miguel Corp. "A" was down 50 centavos to P55, while its "B" shares also shed 50 centavos to P65.50. *AFP*

By Clarissa S. Batino

HEEDING the advice of the International Monetary Fund, the Department of Finance has started studying the impact of an increase in the excise tax on fuel to take advantage of declining prices of crude oil worldwide.

INQUIRER sources said that based on initial estimates, a P1 per liter increase in the current excise tax structure would yield an additional P15 billion in revenue a year.

From a high of about P21 per liter for unleaded and P17 per liter for diesel prior to the US-Iraq war, experts believed that petroleum prices would drop by about P4 per liter in the coming months as crude oil prices go down to about $22 per barrel.

A private economist pointed out that if the government would take advantage of the P4 per liter windfall to raise fuel taxes, it could translate to about P60 billion in additional revenue annually, a level that would cut the projected budget deficit of P202 billion this year by a quarter.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, however, clarified that while the government has started to consider raising the current level of specific taxes on fuel, the level of increase would be minimal.

Discussed only last month, government officials have started talking with legislators to solicit support for the plan to increase excise taxes on fuel products by between 20 and 50 centavos per liter, according to sources.

So far, oil firms have rolled back pump prices five times recently since crude oil prices started dropping even while the US-Iraq was still ongoing.

Camacho said the intention was to take advantage of the decline in world oil prices to raise taxes, which have remained unchanged since 1996 when the local oil sector was liberalized. Among developing economies, the Philippines has one of the lowest prices of fuel.

Since 1996, specific taxes in fuel product are as follows: P5.35 per liter of premium gasoline, P4.35 per liter of unleaded, P4.80 per liter of regular gasoline, P1.63 per liter of diesel, P3.67 per liter of jet fuel, 60 centavos per liter of kerosene, 30 centavos per liter of fuel oil, P5.70 per liter of lubricants, P1.76 per liter of asphalt, P4.70 per liter of waxes, P2.53 per liter of thinners, and P1.25 per liter of processed gas.

The finance chief said the government had started to study a plan not only "to raise excise taxes by a small amount" but also to index the prices to inflation similar to pending legislation to automatically adjust taxes on beer and tobacco products.

"The idea is to take advantage of the windfall situation to raise revenue for the government while not putting additional burden on consumers," the finance chief said in an interview.

The plan to raise fuel taxes was first raised by the IMF in 2001 when then head of IMF mission Joshua Felman urged the government to consider the recommendation.

An IMF mission in town, according to sources, reiterated its recommendation to increase fuel taxes.

Fate of Burger King still hangs

By Doris C. Dumlao

CONGLOMERATE Ayala Corp., which is phasing out its interests in the food industry, may fold up the operations of fast-food chain Burger King if it is unable to strike an acceptable sellout deal soon enough.

In an interview with reporters, Ayala managing director Rufino Luis Manotok disclosed that shutting down bleeding Burger King was an option, but the foremost priority would still be to scout for a buyer and keep the business going so that it could command a better price.

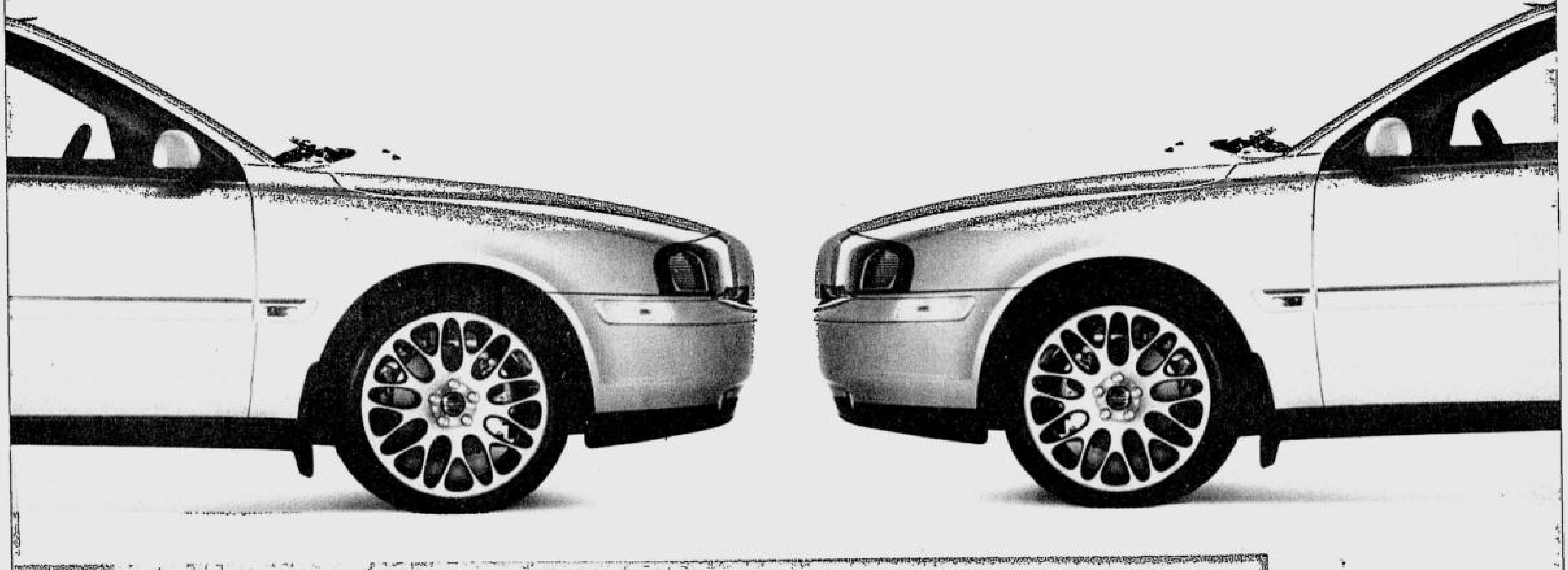
"At some point in time, we hope to be able to sell it, but if not, we simply have to look at the option of probably closing it down," Manotok said.

"But we haven't reached that decision point yet. We're still at that stage where we're confident that we can sell it. It's just that it's hard un-

FATE/ B4

A THAI Airways flight attendant offers a passenger a glass of juice aboard a nearly empty 744 jumbo jet on a morning flight from Bangkok to Singapore May 10. Both Thailand and Singapore's tourist arrivals have fallen sharply due to the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Analysts have forecast a second-quarter profit decline for Thai Airways in a range of 44 to 63 percent due to increased fuel prices and falling passenger numbers.

REUTERS



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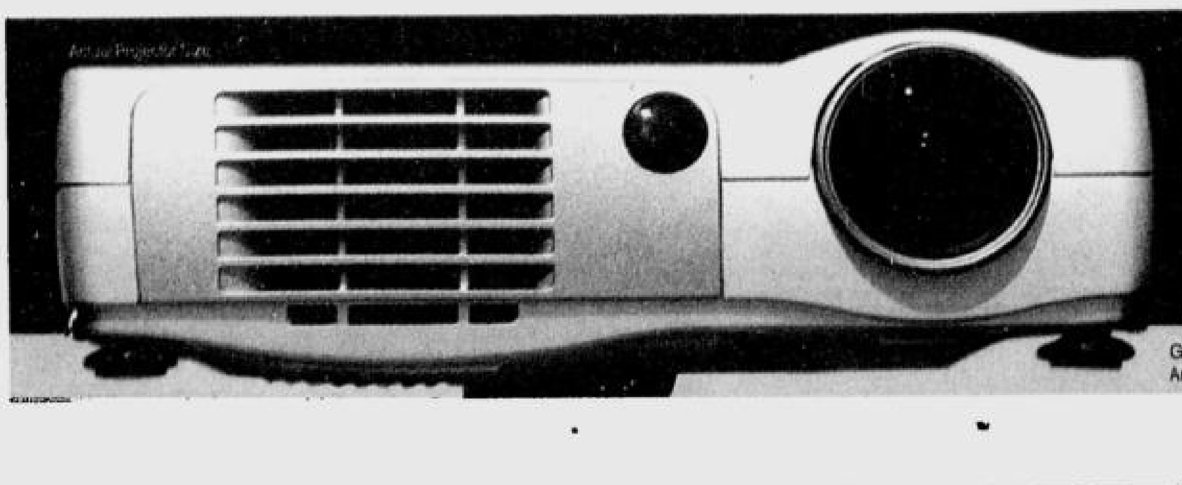

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SARS and stripes still fly over Beijing

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

THE MARKET may be boring but if you have the right product, it will be sought after. This was the experience of the Daily Planet, which went public on the Melbourne Stock Exchange last week. Although it sounds like a newspaper, the Daily Planet is actually the first legitimate brothel to go public. Prostitution is legal in Australia, Holland and several countries in Europe, and the notorious Madame Heidi Fleiss was there to promote the issue. There was such a strong demand for the shares that brokers were fighting for them and they more than doubled on the opening day from $0.50 to $1.09 with 1.4 million shares changing hands. Since then, the price has doubled again to over $2 with nobody willing to sell.

The bordello (French for brothel) is a fairly modest building with a bar and 18 rooms, with spacious beds and spas for multiple coupling. Investors only participate in the rental income, not the girls' earnings, but a much bigger place is going to be built in Sydney, to be followed by a Sex Disneyland (the mind boggles).

If only we could do the same here, we could turn the Philippine economy around and eliminate the deficit. All the bars on P. Burgos, Pasay, Tomas Morato and Subic could all go public (I nearly wrote pubic) and we could have 100 new companies trading on the Sexdaq. Tourism would boom, the peso would appreciate to 40, Fraport would have to build more airports and we would need more motels and restaurants. They should be built along the lines of the King Arthur Hotel where you can lancelot.

Of course, the current administration is not likely to agree to this, but Cardinal Sin will be retiring soon and Gloria will be bowing out next year. The incoming administration of Fernando Poe Jr. and Aubrey Miles is likely to pursue a more hedonistic policy so we could well see turnover in the stock market hit P4 billion again. Personally, I would like to see Efren Reyes as President. He is so likeable and I am sure he does not have a corrupt bone in his body. He is obviously intelligent, the way he positions himself for his next shot, and he certainly has the balls for it.

GMA (NOT Ate Glo) is suing ABS-CBN for P12 million, alleging that they are distorting the signal. One viewer wrote to me that he was unable to distinguish Arnold Schwarzenegger from Mariah Carey.

Whenever Alan Greenspan speaks, I always write about it because the United States is the major economic super power, so whatever happens to them must affect the rest of the world. Before speaking, he prostrated himself in front of the House to show that his prostate surgery had been successful. As expected, the Fed did not change interest rates but Greenspan surprised most analysts when he announced that the economic data were disappointing and that the economy was tilted toward weakness. The market was in one of its euphoric moods and chose to ignore his remarks. Basically, the situation is as follows:

On the negative side, manufacturing activity is still declining, 525,000 workers have been retrenched in the last 3 months bringing the total number to 2.1 million since 2001. Claims for unemployment benefits have risen from 5.8 percent to 6 percent, consumer spending is static and retail sales are little better than last year. CISCO warned that demand for information technology equipment showed no signs of recovery, and Microsoft and Intel would not give any guidance for the rest of the year. The P/E ratio on the S&P companies is 18, slightly high.

On the positive side, a cut in interest rates next month is reckoned to be a 90-percent certainty, there is a $350-billion tax cut coming, consúmer confidence is picking up, the stock market is strong and the dollar has depreciated by more than 30 percent against the euro. This makes American goods that much cheaper in Europe and European goods much more expensive in the United States. So this should help exports in the long run and hopefully reduce the monthly deficit of $40 billion.

However, there is a major obstacle, which is that the Chinese YUAN is pegged to the US dollar. This means that Chinese goods are also 30 percent cheaper, thereby posing a major threat to manufacturing worldwide, and to Asia in particular. China has a population of 1.3 billion and a gigantic labor force of low-paid workers. Years ago, China only produced shoddy, low-quality products, but in recent years, the quality and variety of manufactured goods have been constantly improving. With major corporations, including information technology, shifting their production to China, competition is going to become even fiercer, especially for Japan.

In the 1st quarter of 2003, China's GDP grew by an astounding 9.9 percent but SARS will undoubtedly slow it down temporarily. The effect of this non-stop outpouring of manufactured goods will be to hold prices down. This means that companies throughout the world will not be able to increase prices, so margins will remain under pressure and more jobs will have to go in order to cut costs further.

In effect, China has become a major deflationary force, which could push the rest of the world into recession. Fortunately, the United States has an exceptionally experienced team of economists and if there is any way to prevent this from happening, they will surely find it. They have learned a great deal from the disastrous experience of Japan. Nevertheless, the threat is real and Greenspan's remarks indicate that the situation is finely balanced and could go either way. I will write more about the insidious effects of deflation next week.

I have been feeling decidedly off-color lately [kidney problem] so I will temporarily suspend my usual practice of replying to every e-mail and will only respond selectively. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Firm sets Clark expansion

YOKOHAMA Rubber Co. Ltd. has announced that Yokohama Tire Philippines Inc. (YTPI), a passenger tire manufacturing and marketing subsidiary located inside the Clark special economic zone, will upgrade its facilities to boost production.

YTPI President Seiji Andrei Takai told Clark Development Corp. (CDC) president Emmanuel Y. Angeles of their plan to boost production by 25 percent, infusing 2 billion yen (more than $16.6 million).

The expansion program of Yokohama will start this month, increasing production from two million tires a year to 2.5 million.

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DISCLOSURES

EVER-Gotesco Resources Holdings Inc. denied having any information that can explain the 50-percent increase in its share price that rose from P0.014 to P0.021 per share.

* * *

ELECTED directors of Cosmos Bottling Corp. during its annual stockholders' meeting were Genaro Lapez, Hector Guballa, Pacifico Fajardo, James Chestnut, James Harting, Russel Kisling, Ma. Cristina Bernardino, Bi Yong Chungunco and Juan Santos. But during its organizational meeting, directors Chestnut, Harting, Kisling, Bernardino and Chungunco resigned. Replacing them were Ramon Ang, Gabriel Villareal, Ernesto Maceda, Ferdinand Constantino and Ma. Belen Buensuceso.

* * *

ELECTED directors of Mabuhay Holdings Corp. were Kin Wah Yew, Seng Chay Lee, Delfin Angcao, Ana Maria Katigbak, J. Marsh Thomson, Roberto San Jose and Steven Virata.

* * *

BENGUET Corp. disclosed the creation of its nomination committee with members Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, Benjamin Philip Romualdez and Bernardo Villegas.

* * *

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 29, 8 a.m. at Studio 1 of ABS-CBN Broadcast Center Complex, Quezon City. Only stockholders of record as of April 15 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ELECTED directors of Grand Plaza Hotel Corp. were Wong Hong Ren, Chan Bernard Charnwut, Bryan Cockrell, Angelito Imperio, Mia Gentugaya, Guia Margarita Santos Qua and Joseph Kong. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, May 12, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	15	15	15	15	20,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	36	36	35	35.5	343,600
China Banking Corp.	760	760	760	760	200
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	52,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28	28	27	27	33,000
Philippine National Bank	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	16,000
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	1,400
Security Bank Corp.	11	11	10.75	10.75	11,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	150	200	150	152	170
Manulife Financial Corp.	1390	1400	1390	1400	2,580
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1005	1015	1005	1010	1,520
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.72	870,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	570	570	570	570	81,530
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	5,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	200,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	5,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.27	0.28	9,910,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	80,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	405	407.5	397.5	402.5	124,310
Ivantage Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	250,000
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	11,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	30,000
Manila Electric Co. B	10	10	10	10	227,000
Petron Corp.	2.08	2.12	2.04	2.04	3,391,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	25,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.55	2.6	2.55	2.55	1,451,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	250,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	3,620,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	26,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16	16	15.25	15.75	353,400
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	260,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55.5	55.5	54.5	55	453,300
San Miguel Corp. B	66	66	64.5	65.5	213,700
Universal Robina Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	2,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	10,000
Ayala Corp.	4.1	4.15	4.05	4.1	3,170,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.28	2.28	2.26	2.26	46,000
Al..Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.028	0.024	0.027	9,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.12	2.1	2.12	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.2	0.215	0.19	0.21	4,020,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	500,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.11	300,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	600,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.2	8.3	8	8.1	274,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.4	365,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.57	2,830,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.165	0.17	1,770,000
Music Corp.	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.32	2,060,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.82	1.92	1.82	1.88	249,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	18,500
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Bella Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	310,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	20,000
Manila Jockey Club	7	7	7	7	1,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.29	0.37	0.29	0.37	3,690,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.13	0.155	0.13	0.155	750,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	10,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.9	4,061,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	500,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	50,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.83	0.84	14,220,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	400,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.145	0.145	320,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4.85	4.9	4.8	4.8	4,979,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	400,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	12,000,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	1,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	250,000
Pacifica	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	5,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	485,250	20,622,270.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	79,258,840	184,261,925.00
PRO	24,630,000	56,399,550.00
Mining	412,000,000	1,330,400.00
OIL	8,250,000	112,100.00
GRAND TOTALS:	524,624,090	262,726,245.00

CURRENCIES

May 12, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.870095	1.000000	52.342000
Japan	Yen	0.007424	0.008532	0.446600
United Kingdom	Pound	1.396676	1.605200	84.019400
Hongkong	Dollar	0.111568	0.128225	6.711600
Switzerland	Franc	0.662475	0.761383	39.852300
Canada	Dollar	0.623948	0.717103	37.534600
Singapore	Dollar	0.500774	0.575540	30.124900
Australia	Dollar	0.560592	0.644288	33.723300
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.308128	2.652731	138.849200
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.232026	0.266667	13.957900
Brunei	Dollar	0.499337	0.573888	30.038400
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000102	0.000117	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.020463	0.023518	1.231000
UAE	Dirham	0.236916	0.272287	14.252000
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.149300	60.156700
Argentina	Peso	0.315252	0.362319	18.964500
Brazil	REAL	0.303169	0.348432	18.237600
Denmark	Kroner	0.134679	0.154787	8.101900
India	Rupee	0.018473	0.021231	1.111300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.229003	0.263193	13.776000
Mexico	New Peso	0.085715	0.098512	5.156300
New Zealand	Dollar	0.501351	0.576203	30.159600
Norway	Kroner	0.126960	0.145915	7.637500
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015093	0.017346	0.907900
South Africa	Rand	0.120679	0.138696	7.259600
Korea	Won	0.000725	0.000833	0.043600
Sweden	Kroner	0.108986	0.125258	6.556300
Syria	Pound	0.020717	0.023810	1.246300
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025184	0.028944	1.515000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000546	0.000627	0.032800

INTEREST RATES

May 12, 2003-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 12-May-03 (%)	MART1 9-May-03 (%)
1 Month	7.4538	7.6096
3 Months	7.6596	7.8712
6 Months	8.5	8.6789
1 Year	8.9865	9.0462
2 Years	9.3827	9.475
3 Years	10.3327	10.4077
4 Years	11.025	11.1115
5 Years	11.3481	11.4769
7 Years	12.0038	11.9712
10 Years	12.7115	12.7538
20 Years	13.0577	13.1096
25 Years	13.5962	13.6212

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BMW Certified Pre-Owned Cars:

	Model	Year	Color	Mileage	Price
1	316i	2002	Black	4,750 km	Php 1,350,000
2	318i Limousine	2002	Black	4,500 km	Php 1,850,000
3	318i Limousine	2002	Blue	4,800 km	Php 1,875,000
4	318i Limousine	2002	Silver	3,600 km	Php 1,875,000
5	325i Executive	2002	Green	9,688 km	Php 2,400,000
6	325i Lt. Ed.	2002	Black	10,447 km	Php 2,400,000
7	325i Executive	2002	Silver	6,214 km	Php 2,450,000
8	325 Touring	2002	Silver	2,500 km	Php 2,800,000
9	525i Limousine	2002	Silver	4,550 km	Php 2,650,000
10	525i Executive	2003	Black	6,865 km	Php 3,100,000
11	525i Executive	2003	Blue Water	3,000 km	Php 3,100,000

Other Cars Available:

	Model	Year	Color	Mileage	Price
1	316i	1996	White	52,000	Php 680,000
2	316i	1997	Black	82,000	Php 650,000

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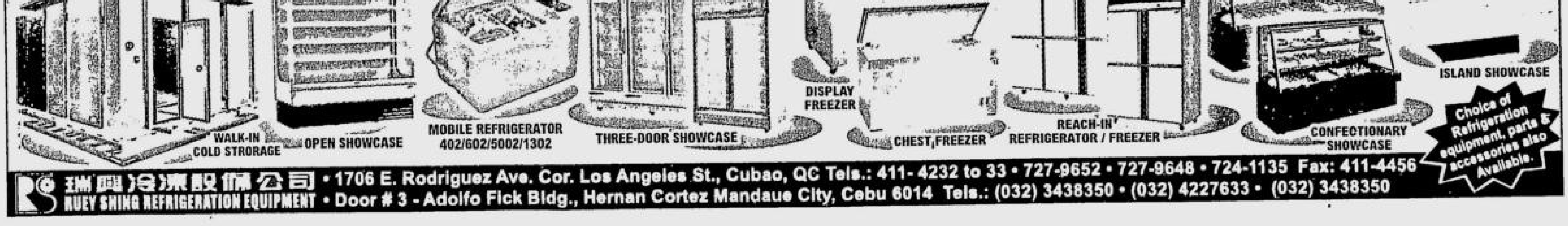
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Treasury bill yields slide; 91-day rate at 6.842%

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT'S cost of local borrowing substantially dropped yesterday as treasury bill yields across all tenors declined, pushing the rate of the benchmark 91-day instrument to 6.842 percent or 58.2 basis points lower from its level two weeks ago.

Used by banks as basis in pricing loans and deposits, a descending 91-day rate indicated lower lending rates in the near future. Banks observe a five-point margin on lending over the three-month treasury yield.

As cash shifted back to government securities, the Bureau of Treasury yesterday decided to accelerate the sale of promissory notes to the end of the month from the earlier schedule of July.

The Treasury was set to auction P3.5 billion worth of fixed-rate promissory notes on May 21. The government sold more than P5 billion worth of these types of notes last April 9.

Promissory notes are bonds that could be counted as loans and thus help reduce a bank's soured loans ratio unlike regular bonds that are usually booked as investments.

Deputy Treasurer Mina Figueroa said liquidity welled in the local market in the absence of other investment opportunities. A treasury bond issue had matured recently and banks chose to put their funds back in government securities, she noted.

Figueroa also credited the drop in treasury yields to a favorable inflation rate and improving government collection. Both factors tend to push down local rates given that risks supposedly diminish and investors demand for a lower return.

The 182-day rate shed 63.9 basis points to 7.761 percent while the 364-day yield slipped by 43.1 basis points to 8.41 percent.

In a rush of liquidity last seen in late 2001, offers from banks reached P21.61 billion cut up in P9.57 billion for the three-month notes, P5.01 billion for the six-month, and P7.04 billion for the one-year papers.

The auction committee led by the Treasury gave a full award of P4 billion, P3 billion and P2.5 billion for each of the tenors but decided to open a tap facility worth P1 billion each for the 91- and 364-day debt notes to raise additional funds for the government.

Figueroa said the government would take advantage of the returning liquidity in the fixed-income market to raise more funds and push down the cost of state funding that had gone up in the last two months largely due to uncertainties caused by the implementation of the 10-percent value-added tax.

The deputy treasurer said bids for the promissory notes should only reach about 90 percent of the prevailing secondary rate for the five-year notes.

For instance, the going five-year rate is about 11 percent. Figueroa said the bids the Treasury would entertain should be around 9.9 percent. Today's auction of 10-year bonds should reflect a similar decline in rates, she said.

Prevailing 10-year rate on the secondary market ranges from 12.125 percent to 12.5 percent. The government expects the yield on the 10-year paper to drop to 12 percent or even lower.

The government said it would sell next month at least P10 billion worth of three- and five-year retail bonds. Appetite for the bonds denominated in P5,000 could bring the proceeds to about P60 billion or comparable to the P63-billion output last year.

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Sheer Driving Pleasure

SARS, Iraq war stall airlines' recovery

By Ofelia Templo

ONE of the major casualties of the US-Iraq war and the recent spread of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Asia is the airline industry. The general view at present is that recent events will likely prolong the industry's recovery.

Meanwhile, the Macapagal-Arroyo administration in late 2002 identified the airline industry as a major sector that will be reformed to step up the recovery of the Philippine economy. In the absence of a clearer indication of how the government intends to implement this policy, many are guessing that open skies policy is essentially the means to achieve this.

The Philippines, in fact, has finished the first round of talks with the US government on the implementation of the 1995 RP-US Air Services Agreement (ASA), which if not postponed, will trigger the full implementation of the open skies policy in the Philippines.

The issue of whether the supply-demand situation in the air passenger industry justifies the adoption of open skies policy can be assessed by examining the capacity utilization, passenger traffic and load factors of the different air carriers in the country.

The load factor of the foreign airlines operating in the country is about 70 percent based on available data on offered seats and passenger traffic in 2002, a drastic decline from 77 percent posted in 2000.

Assuming that a capacity utilization of 80 percent combined with load factor of 70 percent are the trigger conditions to signify a tight supply situation in the industry, then the countries where capacity should be expanded include Hong Kong and France. Hong Kong, however, already has an automatic trigger mechanism incorporated in the RP–Hong Kong ASA which can be invoked to address increased demand. In most of the countries, the problem is not lack of capacity but the unwillingness to add offered seats probably due to lack of demand or to low passenger-revenue.

The low utilization of entitlements can be traced to the poor financial condition of some of the airlines operating in the country.

Stalled recovery

While many airlines particularly those in the Asia-Pacific region have already been recovering from 9/11, the growing pessimism over the US economy by mid-2002 coupled with the prospect of the US-Iraq war only served to stall the momentum for recovery in the industry.

Unfortunately, while war jitters are beginning to dissipate and war optimism has started to take hold, the spread of the deadly virus in late March placed another setback in the industry's recovery. To date, two of Asia's biggest carriers—Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines—already announced cutbacks in services of close to 37 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

Other airlines have similarly reduced their service due to the various travel advisories that discouraged travel to SARS-infected areas—like China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam and Toronto. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Escap) warned that the SARS outbreak has the potential of derailing the prospects for the region, causing a possible 0.5-1 percent reduction in the growth of the Asia-Pacific region (in 2003). Other than the airline industry, the sectors which will likely be affected by the SARS include the restaurant, entertainment and the retail sectors.

During the last two decades, the aviation industry is apparently following a cyclical pattern of growth where 4-6 years of profit were followed by 3-4 years of marginal profits or loss. If this pattern will be followed in the present cycle, it is possible that the full recovery of the industry will happen in 2004-2005.

Dim outlook

Recent developments, however, point to a dimmer scenario ahead for the aviation industry. For one, the outlook for the world economy has turned bleaker with fears that the US economy might barely grow this year, dragging world output growth down to around 2 percent from about 5.3 percent in 2002. Secondly, the US-Iraq War, while nearing resolution, has been estimated to cost the industry around $10 billion. Lastly, the SARS, while initially concentrated at the identified SARS areas, has the potential to spread to other sectors if left unresolved. However, if the spread is contained by June 2003, a significant bounce back is possible by the second half of 2003.

Assuming that the government will still be unable to arrest the outbreak immediately and the Philippines will not be declared SARS-free in the next six months, GDP growth could decline from 0.2-1.4 percentage points from the present government target of 4.2 percent depending on whether the "SARS-prone" services sectors like transportation, hotels and restaurants, and trade will reduce output by 1, 5 or 10 percent in the next six months from March because of the SARS scare.

The slower output growth in turn is expected to affect passenger traffic negatively, with visitor arrivals going to the Philippines for holiday, dropping from 2 percent to 4.5 percent during the year given these scenarios. Passenger traffic in general is expected to be sluggish this year particularly to SARS-affected economies. But the countries highly dependent on tourism like Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia will feel the brunt of SARS more adversely than the Philippines.

Options

In view of this, the present negotiations with the United States may consider the following points in assessing the benefits of granting unlimited frequencies to

SARS/ B4

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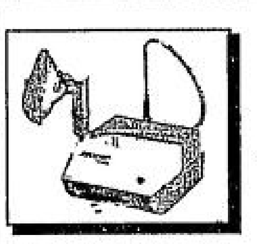

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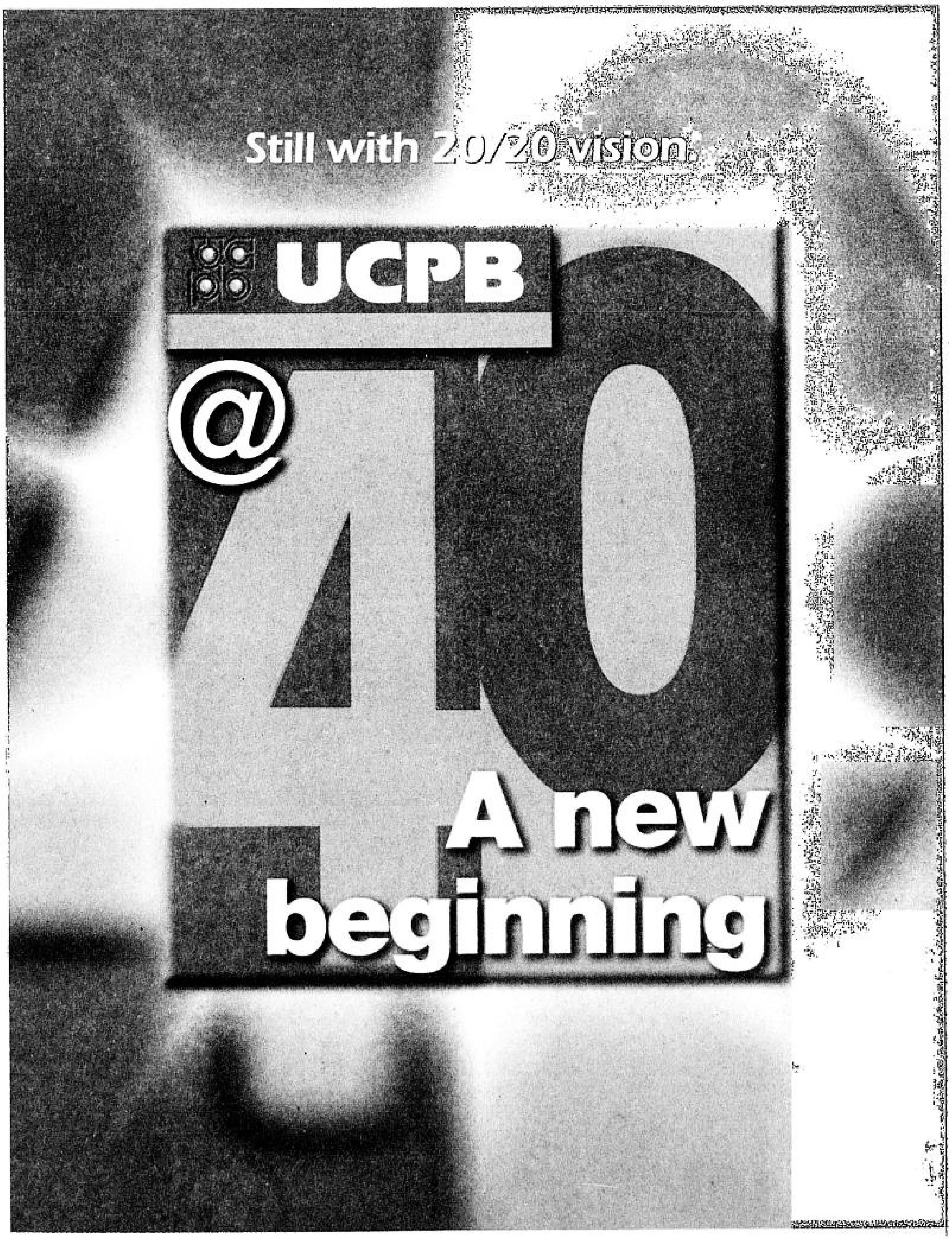

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Compromise on auto tax reform bills proposed

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SENATE is reviewing a proposal to raise the floor price in the vehicle tax base as part of a compromise deal to get the much-delayed automotive tax reforms approved before Congress goes on recess next month.

A government source said lawmakers were looking into the possibility of raising from P500,000 to P750,000 the cut-off price for vehicles that would get the minimum 3 percent tax.

The increase would minimize the impact of the new taxes on Asian utility vehicles which are sold at an average of P600,000 to P700,000 per unit. Based on the pending bill in the Senate, all vehicles worth between P500,000 and P1 million will be slapped an excise tax of P15,000 plus 15 percent of the value in excess of P500,000.

The enactment of the automotive excise tax bill, which has been passed in the House of Representatives in March, has been hobbled by concerns over the effect of the new taxes on the sale of AUVs.

These Philippine-designed vehicles, which combine the comfort of a sedan with the versatility of a pick-up truck, are the industry's best-selling models with the highest local content.

The source said Senators Serge and John Osmeña would continue opposing the vehicle tax reforms unless the incentives granted to AUVs were retained. The Osmeñas believe that AUVs are potent export products. AUVs are currently exempt from excise tax under the Bureau of Internal Revenue 10-seater rule, which excludes vehicles with a seating capacity of at least 10.

Aside from lowering the base vehicle price, Senators were also looking at a proposal to cut the minimum tax rate from 3 percent to 1 percent in order to lower the tax burden on AUVs.

But the source said this was impractical considering that this would mean throwing back the bill to the House of Representatives for review unlike the proposed change in the base price which could be amended during the bicameral stage.

The source said the Senate had committed to pass the bill before its session ends on June 5. The Senate is under pressure from the Department of Finance to approve the bill on May 19 or else the new tax rates under Revenue Regulation 4-2003 would take into effect and distort vehicle sales.

The Senate, however, has declared that it would not abide by any deadline by the DOF which means the government has to defer or abandon RR 4-2003 to avoid any disruption in sales.

Women's peace initiatives

"God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers." –(Jewish proverb)

MINDANAO ONE

Joji Ilagan-Bian

WE celebrated Mother's Day on Sunday. On that day, mothers around the world were treated to something special by their families—maybe breakfast in bed with flowers and cute cards, a lovely dinner or a whole day of rest and relaxation. Indeed, we, mothers, deserve a day off.

Motherhood is not only a role one plays but it also is by far the most difficult profession there is. Motherhood does not start at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m.; it does not stop for the weekend or for Christmas and New Year. It is a lifelong career, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A mother always means well for her kids, she always wants what is best for her children. She is nurturing, forever loyal, supportive, sympathetic and encouraging.

All this is summed up by Washington Irving who said "A mother is the truest friend we have, when trials, heavy and sudden, fall upon us; when adversity takes the place of prosperity; when friends who rejoice with us in our sunshine, desert us when troubles thicken around us, still will she cling to us, and endeavor by her kind precepts and counsels to dissipate the clouds of darkness, and cause peace to return to our hearts."

The Mindanao Business Council, just like a nurturing mother, craves for a peaceful solution to all of Mindanao's problems. Thus, all our initiatives are geared towards creating a harmonious connection with all sectors of society.

One MBC initiative with the help of The Asia Foundation to help curb corruption is the City Coalition for Transparent Governance (CCTAG) which is under the umbrella organization Mindanao Coalition for Transparent and Accountable Governance (MCTAG). This organization covers seven cities in Mindanao and advocates for the resolution of issues and concerns related to transparent and accountable governance. As a show of resolve and commitment, the seven CCTAGs and the umbrella MCTAG have drafted action plans, for finalization prior to actual implementation.

A second MCTAG meeting will be held on May 13 at the Grand Regal Hotel. A series of consultations in the seven cities is scheduled in May and June.

Still on the issue of transparent governance, I had the chance to share the dilemma that is transparency in the business sector in a seminar held by the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Business Council (ABC) with the support of Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program. The ABC along with its local chambers initiated the seminar for them to achieve a higher level of accountability in the private, government and business sectors.

In our continued efforts to assist small and medium enterprises, the MBC works closely with the Department of Trade and Industry in developing the SME sector. Our goal is to strengthen SMEs so they can provide a strong domestic supply base (manufacturing and services) for globally competitive industries.

Peace advocates, women and mothers deserve all the praise, love and respect whether it's Mother's Day or not.

****

LAST Sunday, women and mothers from all sectors of society converged at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Liwasan Asean for the launching of a nationwide campaign dubbed "Mothers for Peace."

In a month-long activity covering major cities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, a selected group of Christian, Moslem and indigenous women leaders will take the center-stage for a common cause, including the return of government and MILF negotiators to the peace table.

The Mindanao Commission on Women's press statement said, "All mothers are urged to show their support for the resumption of the peace talks. Mothers are urged to undertake a text barrage to President Macapagal-Arroyo and the MILF, write letters to the editor, call their congressmen and women, appear on TV talk shows, participate in radio call-ins, and organize public forums."

I believe mothers can be an effective medium in creating a higher level of awareness on what really is happening here in Mindanao. Women and mothers in particular have a strong voice in the social order. This is a show of force by Mindanao women who have long remained silent about the issue of peace. We are now taking a pro-active campaign and bringing it to the doorsteps of different key cities in the Philippines to show the rest of the islands that Mindanao is not a place to shy away from. Our Mindanao is a place of unity and harmony.

(Ms Bian is the chair of the Mindanao Business Council and the acting chair of the East Asean Business Council)

Fate of Burger King . . .

From page B1

der the economic conditions to look for buyers right now," he said.

In any case, Manotok said Ayala had booked P300 million in loss provisions for its investments in Burger King as early as last year so any decision to shut down would not create a dent on its earnings.

"The selling process continues. What we'd like to do is to keep it alive because there's much more value in selling a live entity or ongoing concern versus shutting down, because the potential buyer will definitely put a premium on the fact that it is an ongoing concern," Manotok said.

"That having been said, what we're trying to do is to keep it afloat by rationalizing operations, scaling down some of the outlets which are not producing money. In fact, we've closed down some of the outlets," he said.

Auto industry picks the lesser evil

SPECIAL REPORT

By Raul C. Dancel
Contributor

(Second of 3 parts)

PRICES of AUVs, passenger vans seen increasing to unaffordable levels while those of high-end SUVs are expected to go down.

THE GOVERNMENT had already attempted to revise the country's two-decade-old motor vehicle excise tax system.

In 1996, the Ramos administration decided to slap excise taxes on all utility vehicles, including Asian utility vehicles (AUVs).

The auto industry naturally opposed this move, and they had as an ally the Department of Trade and Industry, which shot down a proposal to cut by half the excise tax on luxury vehicles. Their position then was that there were a lot of "re-definitions" and clarifications that had to be made.

The Department of Finance proposed a shift in the basis of taxation to "gross vehicle weight," but the industry protested, saying this would jack up the prices of utility vehicles by half considering most had weights that would land them in the 50-percent tax bracket.

Counter productive

A committee led by the National Tax Research Center came up with a suggestion to impose a 6- to 10-percent uniform tax on utility vehicles with a seating capacity of 10 or more. These included the Mitsubishi L-300, Mazda E2000, Kia Besta, Nissan Urban and AUVs like the Toyota Tamaraw FX. Vehicles with seats arranged "sideways" or the "jeepney" types retained their tax exemptions.

The committee also sought to cut the tax rate on luxury vehicles from 100 percent to 50 percent to discourage smuggling.

Another proposal was the adoption of two schedules of engine displacements: one for nine seaters and below and another for 10 seaters and above with gross vehicle weights of not more than 3.5 tons, but taxes on which would be 15 percent for vehicles with engine displacement of up to 1,600 cc; 35 percent for a displacement of 1,601 to 2,000 cc and, 50 percent for a displacement of 2,001 cc and above.

In 1997, Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson filed a bill seeking new taxes on AUVs. House Bill 8838 sought to impose a range of tax rates on gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles based on engine displacement: 15 percent for 1,600-cc gasoline engines cc and 1,800-cc diesel engines; 35 percent for 1,601-cc to 2,000-cc gasoline engines and 1,801-cc to 2,300-cc diesel engines; 50 percent for 2,001-cc to 2,700-cc gasoline engines and 2,301-cc to 3,000-cc diesel engines; and, 100 percent for gasoline engines with a displacement of 2,701 cc or bigger and 3,001-cc or bigger diesel engines.

These proposals barely got off the ground because of the strong opposition put up by the industry and because the Department of Trade and Industry did not support them.

Former Trade Secretary Cesar Bautista argued that taxing AUVs would be counterproductive because the manufacturers of these vehicles would just pass on the additional tax burden to their buyers.

The Board of Investments, which oversaw the government's car development program, insisted then that lawmakers should first look at who were buying AUVs and what these vehicles were being used for.

Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., which was then assembling the most popular utility vehicle in the market—the Tamaraw FX—warned that slapping a 15-percent excise tax on AUVs would jack up AUV prices by as much as P100,000.

Shape up or ship out

Running very short on cash, however, the government is again pressing its case, and it is doing so even more forcibly. The government has given the local auto industry a take-it-or-leave-it deal. There's no going back to the old system.

The Macapagal administration incurred a budget deficit of P210.7 billion last year. It is hoping to keep its deficit below P202 billion this year. In the first quarter, it has managed to keep its deficit to P58.9 billion.

To shore up its revenues, the government is again turning its attention to overhauling the motor vehicle tax system to get more than the roughly P51 billion it gets each year from the auto industry.

President Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order 156 seeking to restructure the 20-year-old motor vehicle taxation system to a "simple, transparent and equitable value-based taxation system."

As was held in 1996, the government believes that the current excise tax system is lopsided and no longer relevant.

Passenger cars are currently slapped with as much as 35 percent tax, while commercial vehicles—light pickups, sport utility vehicles and Asian utility vehicles—have varying degrees of taxation.

Four-wheel SUVs carry hefty duties but not four-wheel drive pickups. Pickups are exempted because they have beds, an indication that the vehicle is mainly used for commercial purposes.

SUVs get a tax break if the vehicle can seat at least 10 people, which AUVs take advantage of because of their passenger capacity. This so-called 10-seater rule, the government believes, has led to revenue losses since three out of every four SUVs and AUVs sold last year were tax-exempted.

Car tax bills in the making

Congress is now working on two bills that will replace engine displacement and differentiation according to fuel type as bases for taxation with the "net manufacturer's price."

Senate Bill 2157 and House Bill 5719 prescribe:

- A 3-percent excise tax on vehicles worth up to P500,000;
- For vehicles worth P500,000 to P1 million, the tax rate is: P15,000 plus 15 percent of the value in excess of P500,000;
- For vehicles worth over P1 million to P2 million: P90,000 plus 30 percent in excess of P1 million; and
- For vehicles worth over P2 million: P390,000 plus 50 percent in excess of P2 million.

Under the proposed revenue scheme, a compact sedan with a net manufacturer's price of P650,000, for instance, will be worth about P687,500—that is, P650,000, plus P15,000 and 15 percent of the value in excess of P500,000, in this case, 15 percent of P150,000, or P22,500. In the existing tax structure, the same car will be worth around P877,500.

Both SB 2157 and HB 5719 remove the AUV's tax-exempt status because they no longer put distinctions in the definition of an "automobile."

Dreaded RR 4-2003

In case these bills fail to make it before Congress goes on recess next month, the Bureau of Internal Revenue is all set to roll out Revenue Regulation 4-2003. RR 4-2003 tightens the implementation of the seating capacity rule, which exempts from excise taxes utility vehicles that can seat 10 or more.

Placed in a devil-and-the-deep-blue-sea situation, the auto industry is picking the lesser evil. It is backing SB 2157 and HB 5719.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) has said in a position paper that if RR 4-2003 is implemented, "the resulting situation alone could hardly be considered conducive to the expansion of the market since it will make prices of AUVs and various passenger vans skyrocket to unaffordable levels by as much as 35 to 50 percent."

According to Campi, if the bills currently pending in Congress become a law, an AUV worth P664,679 now will carry a price tag of P687,821. If RR 4-2003 takes effect, that same vehicle will cost P997,020.

Win-win situation

A recent Senate study done on RR 4-2003 shows that the retail prices of AUVs, pickups and vans will increase as a result of this revenue-generating plan, while luxury cars produced by companies like BMW, Mercedes Benz and Porsch, usually priced at P1 million and above, will enjoy price cuts of between 20 and 50 percent.

Under the BIR tax scheme, a model of the Toyota Revo currently priced at P850,000 will cost P899,853. Mitsubishi Adventures will retail for around P698,603 from P675,000, while the Isuzu Crosswind will each cost P921,703 from its previous price tag of P869,000.

The Toyota Hi-Ace, which costs about P827,000 each, will cost P873,403 under RR 4-2003, while the Mitsubishi L300's price tag will hit P882,603 from P835,000.

High-end sport-utility vehicles, such as the Toyota Prado, will cost P2.03 million under the new scheme, down 26 percent from the current price of P2.75 million. Prices of the Toyota Land Cruiser will go down by 39 percent from P5 million to P3.04 million, while the Ford Escape will be 21 percent cheaper at a range of P880,196 to P1.1 million.

With this much disparity in RR 4-2003, the auto industry is left with little choice but to throw its support behind Congress.

"The new excise tax bill will result in a win-win situation that will lead to market expansion for the automobile industry, as well as increase investor confidence that will transport the domestic market into a base for export of vehicles and parts," Campi said in its position paper.

It added: "What's more, with a wider choice of car models that's competitively priced entering the market, more Filipinos will finally fulfill their dream of owning a brand-new vehicle." *(To be continued)*

SARS, Iraq war stall airlines' recovery

From page B3

US airlines by 2003:

- Excess capacity exists in the RP-US routes. As of March 2003, less than half of seat entitlements under the existing RP-US ASA have been utilized by US airlines, which has been reducing seat offers since the winter 2001 up to the summer 2002 due to financial problems. Due to weak demand for travel given the SARS-related advisories on top of terrorist-related warnings and security checks, US airlines are expected to further cut back in flights in the coming months.
- Based on the Medium-Term Development Plan, government policy does not support the grant of unlimited frequencies to partner countries even in situations where these may be justified.
- At this time, tourist flow is not expected to increase with expanded seat capacity. External shocks like the US-Iraq war and the SARS virus have a stronger influence on tourist flow than any expansion in capacity at this time.
- On the part of the US majors, the sentiment toward "open skies" might be lukewarm and will not likely result in additional seat capacity.
- The financial difficulties of air carriers will prevent a further reduction in air fares.
- The grant of unlimited frequencies might further erode PAL's financial position.
- The Philippine panel should negotiate for greater access in the US market. National interest dictates that the Philippines gets equal treatment in the concessions that will be granted by both contracting parties.

The passenger component of the Philippine aviation industry is going through challenging times. Depressed demand due to the general weakness in the world economy and the adverse consequences of the SARS and the US-Iraq war are taking their toll on the finances of the air carriers in the country.

Because there is no urgency to expand capacities in routes serving the US and the Philippines, which remain largely unutilized, the government should renegotiate for an extension of the transitory period of the 1995 RP-US ASA. A breathing space may be necessary in order to allow the national carriers to recover from its present financial difficulties.

(The author was former assistant director general of the National Economic and Development Authority and incumbent secretary-treasurer of the Philippine Economic Society. She currently teaches economics at the Ateneo de Manila University.)

China to lose $5B in investments

BEIJING—China's foreign direct investments (FDI) could decline by $5-$6 billion if SARS is not brought under control in the latter part of the year, state press reported Monday.

FDI is expected to decrease by $1 billion in the second quarter and possibly another $5 billion in the second half of the year due to the impact from the virus, the China Daily said, quoting Gao Huiqing of the State Information Center.

China's first-quarter contracted FDI, a measure of future business activity, rose 59.6 percent year-on-year to $22.98 billion, while actual FDI was up 56.7 percent at $13.09 billion.

Last year contracted FDI was $82.76 billion, up 19.6 percent from 2001, with actual FDI rising 12.5 percent to $52.7 billion.

This made China the world's largest foreign investment destination as corporations such as Toyota and General Electric poured in money to build or expand manufacturing bases.

Gao said he hoped SARS would be brought under control within the next three months, reversing the expected second quarter decline on the back of strong overseas capital flows in the second half of the year.

Despite overarching concerns about overseas companies' China investment plans due to SARS some economists remained buoyant.

Actual FDI could reach $60 billion this year despite the forecast second quarter decline, reflecting strong first-quarter growth and last year's large contracted FDI figure, said Jin Boshong, a senior researcher with the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Co-operation. *AFP*

Bush tax cut needed to boost 'soggy' US economy–Snow

WASHINGTON—US Treasury Secretary John Snow said on Sunday the United States was suffering from a "soggy" economy that needs to double its growth rate, and President George W. Bush's tax cut package would help solve the problem by creating more jobs.

Appearing on four Sunday morning talk shows, Snow said Congress needed to pass close to $550 billion of what's left of Bush's tax cut plan to create more jobs and boost the economy, which has lost 2.7 million jobs since Bush has been in office.

"A soggy economy is what we've got today," Snow said on ABC "This Week" news program. "We're in a recovery, but it's not as strong and robust as it should be," he added.

Snow said the economy needs to grow by at least double the 1.6 percent growth rate that was achieved during the January-March period.

To help boost the economy, Bush is urging Congress to pass a 10-year tax cut plan, which Snow said would create 450,000 jobs by the end of this year and 1.5 million jobs by the end of next year.

"The economy is under-performing its potential, and as a result millions of people don't have jobs who otherwise would have one. And that's the reason for the president's proposal," Snow said.

SNOW REUTERS

The House of Representatives approved on Friday a $550 billion tax cut that is lower than the president's original request of $726 billion, but more than the the $350 billion being considered by the Senate.

Both chambers will eventually have to hammer out their difference to come up with a final tax cut package.

Snow refused to speculate whether Bush would accept some 30 other tax increases, such as higher taxes on Americans working overseas and closing corporate tax loopholes, that the Senate may impose to offset some of the bigger Bush tax cut plan.

"I'm not yet in a position to really give you a firm view of what is in the offsets, or how we would come down on them," Snow said on CNN's "Late Edition."

Democrats in Congress are worried the president's tax cut will increase the federal budget deficits to record levels.

Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle said his Democratic colleagues would not support the tax cuts "of the magnitude" that the president and Republican lawmakers want.

"Tax cuts have to be paid for," said Louisiana Democratic Sen. John Breaux.

Snow said budget deficits, which are projected to reach several hundred billion dollars a year, would not have much impact on the $11 trillion US economy.

"The deficit we have today is manageable," he said. *Reuters*

ELEMENTARY school children in Citibank uniforms learn how to coordinate banking business, at a Citibank office located at a Tokyo elementary school for a junior achievement project. Tokyo's Shinagawa ward started an education program called "Student City", in which seven private companies, including a bank and telephone company, provide facilities in the ward's elementary schools for children to learn about business and economics, using a school electronic money system. AFP

Dollar continues to fall, hits 4-year low vs euro

TOKYO—The euro hit another four-year high against the dollar on Monday after US Treasury Secretary John Snow said a cheap US currency would help US exports.

"When the dollar is at a lower level it helps exports, and I think exports are getting stronger as a result," Snow said on a US television program on Sunday.

On another program, Snow said Washington was committed to a strong dollar but that its value would be set by markets.

"The fact that he mentioned the benefits of a weak dollar could be taken as a sign that he accepts weak dollar," said Shogo Nagaya, forex manager at Nomura Trust and Banking Corp. in Tokyo.

"His comments will set the tone of the market this week," Nagaya added.

The dollar has been steadily weakening in recent weeks on doubts about the outlook for the US economy.

The drop was also due to lower US interest rates compared to those of other currencies.

The euro was at $1.1572/77, up about three quarters of a percent from about $1.1490 in late US trade on Friday, and hitting its highest level since January 1999.

The single currency also hit a record high against the yen, touching 135.40/52 yen from around 134.67 in New York.

The dollar's slide against the yen was curbed by wariness that Japanese authorities could intervene to stem the yen's rise.

The greenback slipped to 116.80/85 yen, down from about 117.20 yen in US trade.

But it was still some way off its recent 10-month bottom of 116 yen hit last week.

Talk swirled late last week that Japan had intervened recently but the Ministry of Finance declined to comment.

"The data the government recently announced showed they intervened on many days early this year so I think they could be in the market any time," said Nagaya.

Last week, Japan said it sold the yen for dollars and euros on 17 days in the first quarter of 2003, starting from January 15 when the dollar fell below 118 yen in the run-up to the US-led war in Iraq. *Reuters*

EU official predicts accord on thorny farming reform

CORFU, Greece—The European Union's agriculture commissioner predicted Sunday that the EU would reach agreement next month on its thorny and controversial agriculture reform proposals.

"It is absolutely clear that we'll have a decision in June," Franz Fischler told journalists on the sidelines of an EU agriculture ministers' session being held on the Greek island.

"We get closer and closer to practical acceptable solutions to all the parties," he said.

The European Commission—the EU's executive arm—has presented proposals to reform the EU's Common Agriculture policy (CAP) by decoupling the amount farmers receive in subsidies from the amount they produce.

Farm reform talks are considered key to the World Trade Organization's (WTO) overall Doha Development round of trade liberalization talks, launched in November 2001 with the aim of concluding by the end of 2004.

The EU has been criticized by other WTO members for its level of support to farmers.

Europe's reluctance to phase out massive subsidies for farmers has sparked international criticism that the CAP gives Europe's agricultural products an unfair advantage on world markets.

Fischler and the Greek EU presidency want agreement on CAP reforms by next month ahead of an EU summit in Greece.

But Fischer showed no willingness Sunday to compromise on the especially delicate issue of decoupling direct aid to farmers, the most controversial point in his reform proposals.

A majority of the EU's 15 members led by France and Spain have serious reservations about decoupling.

France and Spain are the main net beneficiaries of CAP in its present form.

"It is not the right time to discuss potential compromises," Fischer said: "It is very dangerous to discuss partial decoupling because, depending on the member states, the interpretation of partial decoupling is very different." Meanwhile some 300 members of a Greek anti-globalization group called Greek Social Forum demonstrated Sunday in Corfu against the EU ministers' three-day informal session here. *AFP*

British business leaders urge Blair to adopt single currency

LONDON—Leaders of 25 top companies with a total of 100,000 employees in Britain have sent a joint letter to Prime Minister Tony Blair warning him of "serious consequences" for the country's economy if it remains outside the euro zone, a daily newspaper reported Monday.

Among those signing the letter are British Airways chairman Colin Marshall, Chris Gent, the head of Vodafone, and executives of Ford, Philips, BAE Systems, British American Tobacco, Unilever, WPP and Siemens, the Daily Mirror said.

"We hope that the government will have the courage of its convictions and recognize that membership of the euro is in our long-term national interest," the letter said.

"To do otherwise would have serious consequences for future prosperity."

It called on the prime minister to announce a referendum on the issue before the next general elections, due in 2006, the Mirror said.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown is due to announce before June 7 a decision on whether the government's five self-imposed economic tests for joining the euro have been met.

A positive verdict on the tests would pave the way for a public referendum on adopting the currency, but the decision is widely expected to be that Britain is not ready to join.

Blair, who is considered to be more enthusiastic on the euro than Brown, has made no secret of his desire to lead Britain into the euro zone.

Another Cabinet member, leader of the House of Commons John Reid, a Blair ally, said Sunday the question was "not whether we will join the euro but it is when we will join the euro."

Brown, who is reputedly less keen on Britain joining the European single currency, on Sunday moved to reassure Britain's pro-euro lobby.

"I have always been pro-Europe. And by history, by geography, by economics we are very much part of Europe," Brown said in an interview with Good Morning Television. *AFP*

PNB
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NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 27, 2003 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2002 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on June 25, 2002
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2002
5. Approval of the 2002 Annual Report
6. Ratification of All Acts and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2002 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
7. Election of Directors
8. Appointment of External Auditor
9. Other Matters
10. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2002 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from June 26, 2002 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 28, 2003 will be entitled to vote at this meeting.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a **PROXY** to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 22, 2003. A Proxy shall conform with the requirements of Sec. 58 of the Corporation Code, and shall be affixed with a duly paid documentary stamp tax in accordance of Sec. 192 of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997.

Pasay City, March 21, 2003

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

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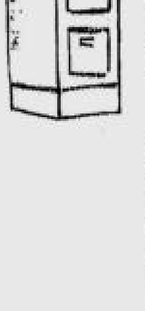

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Qualifications:
- Preferably with a degree in Business Management or a commercially oriented subject.
- Minimum 5 years corporate sales experience, preferably in a service-related industry.
- Previous experience of major account handling would be an advantage.
- Service industry experience
- Total dedication to and focus upon servicing and supporting both internal and external customers is absolutely essential.
- Possesses strong analytical and sales management skills.
- Good communication (oral and written)and presentation skills.
- Excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills.

SERVICE QUALITY ANALYST
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Overall Purpose:
To proactively provide data and business analysis in support of Operations, Gateway and Customer Service with the objective to improve operational effectiveness, costs, efficiency, productivity and profitability and to ensure that Customer, Country and Network service and Business Plan commitments are fully met.

Qualifications:
- Minimum of two (2) years business experience.
- Have worked with industry standard analysis tools.
- Familiar with Statistical analysis techniques
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture/Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA/BFAR) invites eligible Boat Builders/Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the construction and delivery of 35 units 29-footer Patrol Boats made of Fiberglass Reinforce Plastic (FRP) hull, a project under the Bantay Dagat Program, RP-Japan Increased Food Production Program (KR-II).

A Two Envelope System or the Single Stage Bidding Variations shall be adapted which requires bidders to submit their Technical and Financial Proposals separately in two-sealed envelopes. The Technical Proposal shall be opened first and evaluated to determine their conformity with the technical requirements. Bidders shall be evaluated based on the eligibility requirements and Technical Proposal.

Only the Financial Envelopes of the Technically compliant Bidders shall be opened and evaluated further. Financial Envelope of non-compliant bidders shall be returned unopened.

Interested Parties can obtain the eligibility requirements at the Office of the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the 7th Floor Arcadia Bldg., 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City from May 12-14, 2003.

Deadline for submission of two (2) copies of eligibility requirements will be on May 19-20, 2003.

Bidding document will be made available on May 26-27, 2003 upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility and upon payment of non-refundable amount of P1,000.00.

Pre-bid Conference will be on May 29, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. at the 4/F BFAR Conference Room Arcadia Bldg., 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Submission of Technical and Financial Proposals will be on June 4, 2003 at 1:00 to 1:45 p.m. at the 4/F BFAR Conference Room.

Opening of Technical Proposal will be on June 4, 2003 at 2:00 p.m., 4/F BFAR Conference Room.

Opening of financial proposal will be on June 13, 2003, 4/F BFAR Conference Room

For local bidders, only duly Licensed and MARINA Accredited Shipbuilders/Contractors are qualified to participate while for foreign Shipbuilders/Contractors, they must have local counterparts engaged in the construction of fiberglass patrol vessels in the Philippines and should also be licensed/accredited also by MARINA. Shipbuilders with proven design similar to BFAR specification are given preference.

Failure to comply with the requirements shall be the immediate ground for disqualification.

Additional information may be furnished upon request. Please address all communications to the DA/BFAR BAC Chairman, Attention: DA/BAC Secretariat, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, 7th Floor, Arcadia Bldg., 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City or call telephone Nos. 373-7445 or 374-5569.

DA/BFAR reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract to the winning bidder with the most advantageous offer to DA/BFAR. The DA/BFAR assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does not guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) CESAR M. DRILON, JR.
Chairman, DA/BFAR BAC

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2 Corinthian 5:4-5

Neomisia "Nena" Magno vda. de Torres

September 25, 1920 - May 10, 2003

With full faith in the Risen Lord, we, the bereaved children Lou and Ding Salvador, Chona and Bong del Rosario, Vic and Glo Torres, Hec and Tere Torres, Taling and Bernie Torres, Mike and Rose Torres, Gabby and Hilda Torres, Dita and Nelson (†) Abril, Lilit and Junior del Rosario, Ricky and Miami Torres, Beatle and Shirley Torres, and Yola and Boy Tria and all grandchildren, great grandchildren, her brothers, sisters, in-laws and friends would like to share the joy of her joining our Lord in the heavenly promise of redemption.

Mommy's remains lie in state at the Our Lady of Peace Memorial Chapels located at No. 6 Carigma St., Antipolo City (near the Cathedral). The Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on Wednesday, 14 May 2003 at 3:00 p.m. at the Chapel of the Our Lady of Peace Memorial Park located at Sto. Niño St., Antipolo City.

Mommy, now in the company of Daddy, will be delighted to share with all of you the New Life she has received from our Lord. Your special prayers will be most appreciated.

Thank You.

"Come to me, all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28

Ronald Ong Rañola

of

Emerald Farm, Nasisi, Tobgon.
Ligao City, Albay
Joined his Creator on May 11, 2003
at the age of 48 years old.

His bereaved wife **Susan Dorotan Lim** and children **Dioklan, Rosette, Ray & Rachel**; mother **Rosario (Ong Siok Hon)**; brothers **Arthur** & wife **Marites Que, Fernando** & wife **Macon Malanyaon**; sisters **Virgie** & husband **Cesar Luz, Rose** & husband **Rollo Milante, Nancy** & husband **Ric King**; relatives, friends and employees request for the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Funeraria Oro, Rizal St. Legazpi City, Albay. The interment will be on May 18, 2003, 2 p.m. at the Legazpi Chinese Cemetery after the 12 n.n. Mass.

Simeona Atengco

of **158 Sto. Domingo St.,**
corner Calamba St., Quezon City

Peacefully joined our Lord
on May 8, 2003 at the age of 80.

Her children **Angelita & Elmer Yanesa, Zenaida Acuña, Emilia & Atty. Shem Yap, Ofelia & Renato Cano, Erlinda Enriquez, Reynaldo & Ma. Lourdes Atengco, Romeo & Cielo Atengco, Ricardo & Jocelyn Atengco, Gavino Atengco Jr., Marvina & Nilo Guarte, Marilyn Cecilia Atengco**; grandchildren **Mae & Rob, Annie & Ron, Edward, EJ, Aaron, Yvette, Say, Sean, Monette & Eric, Techie & Lof, Charlie, Mia, Pia, RJ, Abigail, Ron, Diovin & Niña, Jun-Jun, Rachel, Anton, Brian, Gel, Tyrone, Baby June, Gavin, Gerard, Anzie, Anya, Peb**; great grandchildren **Mico, Milo, Mary Veil, David, Moira, Gabriel** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel C, La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be today, May 13, 2003 at 8:00 a.m. at North Cemetery, Manila.

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Republika ng Pilipinas
KAGAWARAN NG KATARUNGAN
Department of Justice
Manila

30 April 2003

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. 33

TO : ALL CONCERNED
SUBJECT : INCREASE IN AND COLLECTION OF FILING FEES TO COVER ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS FOR SERVICES RENDERED IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROCESSING OF:

(1) APPLICATION FOR ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL NON-IMMIGRANT VISA, OR FOR CHANGE OF ADMISSION STATUS TO, OR FOR EXTENSION OF STAY AS, SPECIAL NON-IMMIGRANT UNDER SECTION 47(a)(2) OF THE PHILIPPINE IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1940, AS AMENDED.

(2) REQUEST FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APPROVED CHANGE OF ADMISSION STATUS FROM TEMPORARY VISITOR/S TO SPECIAL NON-IMMIGRANT/S UNDER SECTION 47(a)(2) OF THE AFORESAID IMMIGRATION ACT;

(3) REQUEST FOR REVALIDATION OF THE APPROVED SPECIAL NON-IMMIGRANT VISA/S;

(4) APPLICATION/REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO EMPLOY OR TO EXTEND THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN TECHNICIANS IN A WHOLLY OR PARTIALLY NATIONALIZED TRADE, BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY UNDER SECTION 2-A OF COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 108, AS AMENDED BY PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 715; AND

(5) APPEAL ON TAX ORDINANCES/REVENUE MEASURES UNDER SECTION 187 OF R.A. NO. 7160 (LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991).

In addition to the documentary requirements prescribed by Office Circular No. 32 dated November 18, 1980 and Office Circular No. 1 dated February 12, 1981 *(Prescribing the procedures for the processing of applications for issuance of special non-immigrant visas, or for change of admission status to, or for extension of stay as, special non-immigrants under Section 47(a)(2) of the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940, as amended)* and Ministry Order No. 21 dated December 1, 1980 *(amending Office Circular dated May 28, 1976, prescribing the procedures for the processing of applications for authority to employ foreign technicians in wholly or partially nationalized trade, business, industry or undertaking)* there shall be collected and paid to the Cashier's Office of this Department to cover administrative costs for services rendered a Filing Fee of P2,500.00 and a U.P. Legal Research Fee of P25.00 per individual applicant and each member of his/her family accompanying him/her with respect to above items nos. 1,2, and 3 and per applicant individual or entity with respect to items nos. 4 and 5.

This Circular is being issued pursuant to Memorandum Circular No. 121 dated November 2, 1990 and Executive Order No. 197 dated January 13, 2000, both of the Office of the President, directing all departments, bureaus and offices, including government-owned or controlled corporations to revise and increase their fees and charges "at just and reasonable rates sufficient to cover administrative costs" but "not less than twenty (20) percent."

The previous Circulars on the same subject matter are hereby amended insofar as the amount of filing fees to be paid is concerned.

This Circular takes effect immediately.

(Sgd.) **SIMEON A. DATUMANONG**
Secretary

(PDI-May 13 & 20, 2003)

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MARIA ROSARIO CONTRERAS Vda. de VALENCIA

**Died in the Grace of our Lord
On May 2, 2003 at TARZANA MEDICAL CENTER, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
At the age of 66.**

Her bereaved family, children **VICTOR & ANA, MA. VICTORIA, RICO & CONNIE, ROBERT & GEMMA, ALBERT & PENNY,** and grandchildren. Her brothers and sisters **TERESITA SANTOS (†), LOURDES Vda. de DIMAYUGA, EDGARDO (†), ERLINDA SYQUIA, CORAZON MORILLO, GERARDO** ("Gerry") and **VICTOR.**

Brothers and sisters-in-law, **ROLANDO SANTOS, SENEN SYQUIA, RAUL MORILLO, ALELI Vda. de CONTRERAS, JUANITA CONTRERAS, ROGER & FE VALENCIA, LINA & MANDING SANTOS, BOY & TESS VALENCIA** and **YENG & JEFFREY DAYRIT,** relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her cremated remains will be at the **Mortuary of Santuario de San Antonio,** Mackinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City on May 14 & 15, 2003.

Mass will be on Friday, May 16, 2003 at 10:30 a.m. at the Main altar of Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City. Interment will immediately follow at the Family Maosuleum Plaza of Honor, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

PSALM 27 – *One thing I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord.*

Our Beloved MOTHER

SIOK WAN "THERESE" WIE PO

*Peacefully joined her Creator
on May 9, 2003, 12:05 a.m. at the age of 90.*

Her memory will always be in the hearts of her children **PACITA, THOMAS, JOSEFA (†), EUSEBIO, LUZ, JUANITA** and **AIDA,** their spouses **DANIEL, JUANITA, FELIPE, NONA, ERNEST** and **ALEX.**

Her grandchildren:
MOSES, SAMUEL, JOSHUA, JONATHAN, DANIEL
CATHERINE, BABS, JOHANNA, THOMAS III
DAVID, DEBORA, DINAH
KAREN, MICHAEL, JENNIFER, VERONICA
RUSSELL, CANDACE
STEPHANIE, JAMES

Spouses of her grandchildren:
AVELINA, DEBRA, JANET
GRAHAM, JOSEPH, ANA MARIE
EMILY, ALAN
BRUCE & BRET

Her great grandchildren:
JESSY, TIFANEE, NATALIE, TEAGAN, DOMINIQUE
PAUL, JEREMIAH, JOHN and ZANNA

Her remains lie in state at Rolling Hills Memorial Chapels, Lacson St., Bacolod City where Holy Masses will be offered everyday at 6:00 p.m.

Interment will be on May 18, 2003 at GreenHills Memorial Park Cemetery, Bacolod City after the 2:00 p.m. funeral Mass at Redemptorist Church, Bacolod City.

Relatives, godchildren and friends are requested
to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

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Beatriz P. Serrano

of Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija

*Peacefully joined her Creator
on Sunday, May 11, 2003 at the age of 84.*

Her husband **Marianing**; children **Divina, Beth, Maricel**; son-in-law **Ely**; grandchildren **Jeffrey, Bea, Mark, Chester** and **Paul**; sisters **Guitang, Minay, Lucing** and **Tindeng**, and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence in Poblacion, Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija.

Interment will be on Thursday, May 15, 2003 at the Peñaranda Municipal Cemetery after the 8:00 am. Mass at the St. Francis of Assisi Parish Church.

Major EMMANUEL MANALO BONOAN

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on May 12, 2003 at the age of 62.

His loving wife **Elisa**; children **Pinky, Ricky & Olive, Bong & Helen, Marissa & Alex, Tricia & Vince** and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue. Cremation will be on Wednesday, May 14, 2003, after the 9:00 a.m. mass.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

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*"I will bless you and make your name great;
and you shall be a blessing." Genesis 12:2*

Our dearly beloved

TOMAS N. DILIG, JR.

*(January 8, 1954 to May 9, 2003)
Peacefully joined our Creator
on May 9, 2003 at the age of 49.*

His wife **Maria Lourdes Libunao-Dilig**; children **Jose Marito** and **Riza Ann**; parents **Atty. Tomas Marquez Dilig, Sr.** and **Rosalina Nojadera-Dilig**; parents-in-law **Ramon Reyes Libunao** and **Luz Angeles-Libunao**; brother and sisters, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law; relatives and friends request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Holy Spirit Chapel, Del Rey Ville Subdivision, Baesa, Caloocan City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, May 14, 2003
at the Holy Cross Memorial Park
in San Bartolome, Quezon City,
after the 9:00 a.m. mass
at the Holy Spirit Chapel.

So Lovingly Remembered
So Dearly Missed

on the First Death Anniversary
of

Architect ANTONIO Q. MARTINEZ

(July 4, 1931 – May 13, 2002)

Holy Masses will be offered today, May 13, Tuesday, at the following churches:

Sacred Heart Parish *Kamuning, Q.C.*	6:00 A.M.
St. Paul the Apostle Parish *Mo. Ignacia, Q.C.*	7:00 A.M. 6:00 P.M.
St. Benedict Chapel *Alabang Hills, Muntinlupa*	7:30 A.M.
Sto. Domingo Church *Quezon Avenue, Q.C.*	12:15 P.M.
Sto. Niño de Paz, Greenbelt Chapel *Ayala Center, Makati*	12:15 P.M.
Manila Stock Exchange Chapel *Ortigas, Pasig*	5:30 P.M.
Don Bosco Parish Church *Pasay Road, Makati*	6:00 P.M.

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INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
LORETTA G. DOMINGO	May 13	8:00 A.M.	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	#15 Ilang-Ilang St. De Castro Subd. Brgy. Sta. Lucia Pasig City
BIENVIENIDA F. GOYAL	May 13	2:30 P.M.	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	Rd. 9 Blk. 15 Lot 14-A Arvoemar Subd. Angono, Rizal
GAUDENCIO DL. GARCIA	May 13	1:00 P.M.	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	102 Garcia Com. Muzon Taytay, Rizal
CRISANTO M. LOBRAMONTE SR.	May 13	1:00 P.M.	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	0057 Bilibiran, Binangonan, Rizal

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E-mail address: sales@holygardens.com

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*Thou we miss you very much
We know you are always there
Whenever we need you...*

In Loving Memory
**On the 13th Death Anniversary
of our dear, so very dear**

PAUL W. LUTHI

from Langnau (Switzerland) and Manila
*who joined his Creator
on May 13, 1990*

---

*"... absent with the body to be present with the Lord"
2 Corinthians 5:8*

Our Dearly Beloved

TEODORO JERUSALEM SIBULO

(April 28, 1922 – May 10, 2003)
Peacefully joined our Lord
on May 10, 2003 at the age of 81.

His loving wife, EMMA; children, DINDO & Mining, ADELL & Cecil, MARIANNE & David; grandchildren, RUTHIE, JING & Anthony, MITCH & Carina and GRACE ANNE; COLLEEN; LISSE and NOEL; great-grandchildren, MIGGY and KEVIN, and the rest of his family, request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Parish of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Daily Mirror Street, West Triangle, Quezon City.

Funeral Mass on Wednesday, May 14, 2003 at 6:00 a.m.

Cremation will follow at Eternal Gardens Crematorium, Baesa, Quezon City

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ATTY. RENATO "RENE" D. TORRES

Peacefully joined his Creator on May 12, 2003 at the age of 72.

His loving wife **Carmen**; son and daughter-in-law **Willie** and **Olive**; grandchildren **Winona, William** and **Willard**; brother and sisters, **Manuel Jr. (†), Nellie** and **Mileta**, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on May 15, 2003 after 9 a.m. Mass at the Himlayang Pilipino.

REAL ESTATE

E-mail: pr_real_estate@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

DAR holds dialogue with developers

By Charles E. Buban

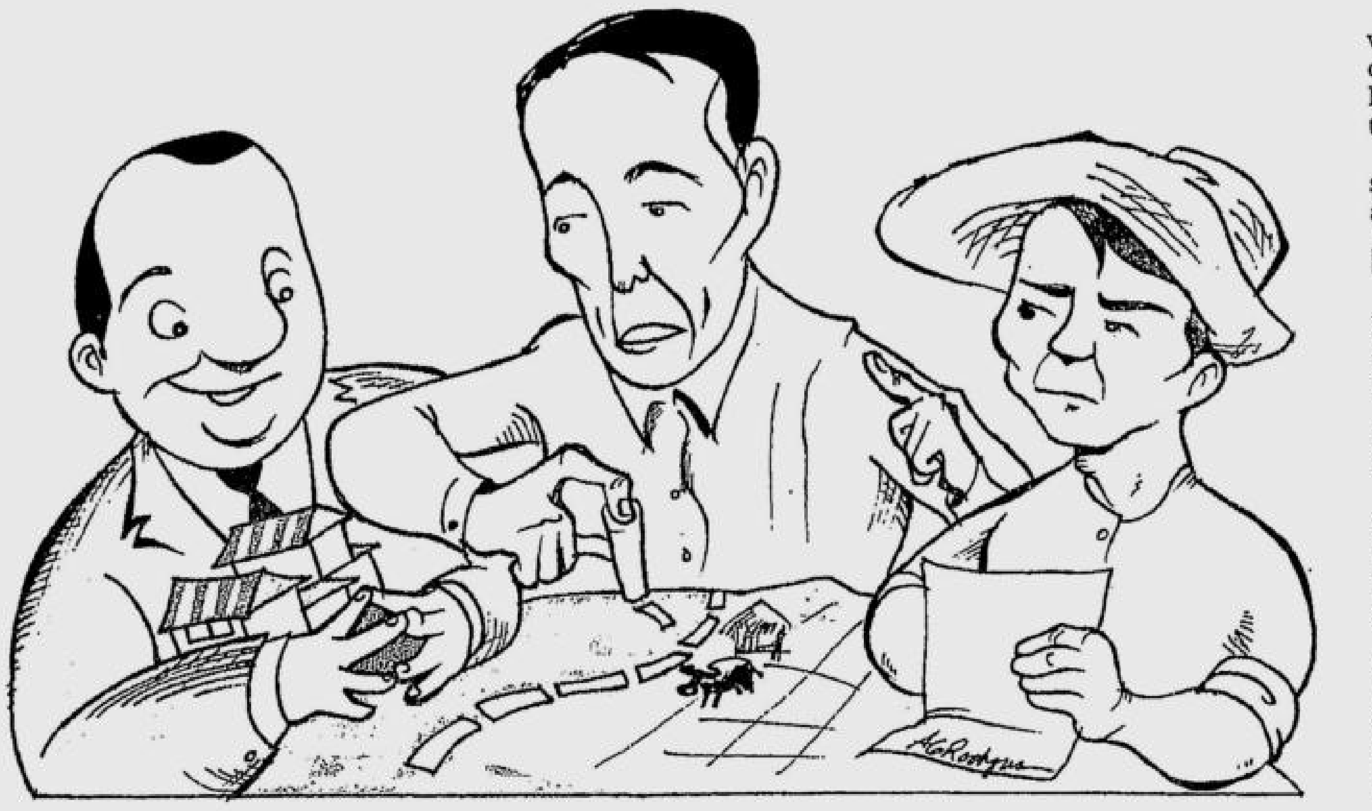
SAFEGUARDING agricultural land for farmers and tillers while making this available for conversion into housing and other settlement projects is like mixing fire and ice and yet this is what the Department of Agrarian Reform is tasked to reconcile.

What would seem two conflicting thrusts can in fact co-exist.

The department believes that while it has the duty to "jealously guard" pieces of land originally earmarked for agrarian reform coverage from being exempted from the program for conversion to other usage, it can also allocate some of them to housing and subdivision developers, provided the requirements are met.

These issues and concerns were recently brought up and discussed by the department during a national workshop held last month for the members of the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association.

The national workshop on DAR conversion and exemption guidelines and procedures, participated in by 92 developers and practitioners, was recently held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City.



Enhancing awareness

The workshop was organized by the DAR to enhance the developers' awareness on the various DAR procedures and guidelines governing conversion and exemption.

"The DAR is also supporting the administration's housing programs, which is why we conducted this workshop. We hoped we have enlightened the participants on the intricacies involved in the processing and issuance of permits," said DAR Undersecretary Ricardo Arlanza who spearheaded the workshop.

Arlanza was joined by director Dominador Andres of DAR Region 4, director Renato Herrera of DAR Region 3, and Center for Land Use Policy Planning Implementation director Jeffrey Galan of the Presidential agrarian reform committee secretariat.

For the past months, the SHDA members have been asking the department's help to grant the conversion and exemption certificates saying they are crucial in attaining the target housing unit.

The SHDA last year signed a declaration before President Macapagal-Arroyo a commitment to provide more than 200,000 new housing units before 2004.

Areas of improvement

"The workshop not only tackled developers' issues and concerns on the DAR but more important, facilitated the fast tracking of the conversion and exemption procedures in accordance with Executive Order 45," said Galan.

SHDA chair Teofisto Guingona III said the workshop has enlightened developers as the DAR facilitators presented a detailed step-by-step procedures and process flow of the various DAR implementing guidelines on conversion and exemption.

Atencio added the workshop was fruitful as both parties were able to devise several reforms and improvements.

The areas of reforms and improvements that will be considered by the department include:

- The issuance of DAR special order 222 that creates the Center for Land Use Policy, Planning and Implementation to fast track applications for land use conversion and exemption;
- Providing a 70-day time period for processing applications for conversion and exemption to residential purposes;
- Delegating to the DAR regional offices the jurisdiction on applications for conversion and exemption involving areas five hectares and below;
- Imposition of administrative sanctions on inaction of the DAR officials;
- Reorganizing counterpart offices in the field and continuing the training and staff development of DAR personnel;
- Continuing the briefing-orientation to various developers to effectively understand the procedures and guidelines on land use conversion and exemption; and
- Continuing the review of existing guidelines on land use conversion and exemption to address the problems and concerns of applicant developers.

Guingona believes that with these developments, he is positive that the SHDA can look forward to the immediate release and approval of pending applications with the DAR.

"This will immediately translate to some 50,000 new housing units," he added.

Promoting farmers' welfare

During the workshop, DAR Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan also dropped by and held a short dialogue with the SHDA officers.

The secretary was joined by Arlanza, Galan and DAR head executive assistant Oscar Robes and Evelio Peña.

"Inasmuch as DAR promotes the welfare of farmers and tillers, the department also takes cognizance of the equally important need of the housing sector," said Pagdanganan.

The SHDA said the dialogue opened the doors for the discussion and resolution of issues and concerns of the country's subdivision and housing developers regarding land conversion and exemption.

"This has paved way for a direct and stronger linkage between the DAR and SHDA developers," said Atencio.

Task force formed

Pagdanganan said during the dialogue that he is forming a task force to fast track pending applications of developers on land conversion and exemption.

He also ordered the review and rationalization of existing DAR rules and procedures concerning conversion and exemption "to ensure compliance with EO 45."

EO 45 provides for the speedy processing of subdivision licenses and permits. The law directs local government units to issue development permits within 30 days from receipt of an application. The DAR is supposed to issue a conversion or exemption order within 30 days from receipt of a completed application.

NEW TREND IN PAVING

The breakwater stretch along Roxas Boulevard that was recently given a facelift included the cement paving of the sidewalks with Vazpave Concrete Pavers, the new trend in paving that brings back rustic realm and panoramic paragon of the seaside charm. The cement paving has been further extended from Aristocrat to the Manila Yacht Club. This recent development elevated Vazcom to world-class category that can further compete with other similar products in the construction and building circle. A truly Filipino innovative product, Vazpave promotes environmental appeal, strength and durability, quick, clean and simple installation as well as reduced maintenance costs.

EGI exec says SkyCity safe, environment-friendly

THE SKYCITY, a landmark project to be located at the corner of Edsa and Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, is designed to be safe and environment-friendly.

"Nothing is being left to chance in the planning and designing of this state-of-the-art building," says E. Ganzon Inc. vice president for external affairs Bobby de Castro.

"This is the reason even if it is taking a longer time to process its environmental clearance certificate," De Castro continues, "the company is willing to walk the mile to get it."

The Skycity, once completed, will be a landmark project and will certainly put the Philippines in the map of countries with tall buildings. The ambitious condominium building will have 87 levels all in all. Efforts are being made to ensure that all the conditions for its contribution to the economy and to social life as well as the improvement of the quality of life of those to be benefited—the community and the national weal in general—are optimized.

Water consumption recycling, fire refuge zones, ample water reservoirs without adversely affecting the needs of the community, fast elevators, filtering of liquid effluents before their discharge to public sewer lines, traffic management within the building to contribute toward road efficiency, pedestrian traffic control, rain catchment system and other details have made technical people of note gasp that the architectural and engineering wonder is "a stroke of engineering genius."

Structural design bolstered by consultants' research both here and abroad (O.A. Kalalo, Menguito and Associates, Maunsell, etc.), careful geological studies and Environmental Impact Assessment studies have been used to ensure the environmental and structural viability of the project. From the technical and legal point of view, the Skycity has scored progressive victories in the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board. Recently, the Greenhills East Association, known protagonist for the "No to High Rise" crusade, suffered another setback when the Office of the President ruled against its appeal to deny a development permit to the project.

It is undeniable that no one can stop progress. Otherwise, improvement in the quality of life of communities will be stunted and the general welfare will be sacrificed for the vested interest of a few.

The bottom line is really whether the positive impacts of a given project surpass its negative impacts and whether the effects of the negative impacts, given the positive impacts, can be mitigated at least, if not eliminated. The real world, considering conflicting interests of various groups on a given issue, only demand that the undeniable march of peoples for a better life, should not be stubbornly hindered.

Federal Land promotes health and fitness at workplace

FEDERAL Land, Inc., prime developer of Metropolitan Park and Bay Gardens condominiums located on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City, recently began a summer health and fitness program for its 500 plus engineers and working crew at the Bay Gardens construction site.

The program includes exercise and calisthenics prior to work every Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

Safety awareness

Part of its goal to promote continued "safety awareness" for its personnel during construction of their various developments, the company has mandated its contractors to provide a full-time safety engineer and nurse onsite, during the course of the construction.

The safety officer ensures that all safety measures are observed by the crew which include proper footwear, the use of hard hats within the construction perimeter, proper rope harness and safety nets as well as the observance of a "strict entry by authorized personnel only" into the construction site areas.

Safety engineer Arnold Duque also conducts a weekly safety meeting with all subcontractors to ensure that safety policies and procedures are being adhered to, conducts safety orientation meetings for new subcontractors prior to mobilization, and is responsible for other programs such as monthly fogging activities, implementation of a "no smoking" policy in critical areas of the site, and security check points for tools and equipment prior to entry at the site.

THE CREW of Bay Gardens during their early morning stretch

Just as well, the onsite nurse is responsible for first aid and medical requirements of the crew—be it just ordinary aches and pains, or any possible injuries while on-the-job. Bay Gardens has had no accidents during the construction of not only its first two towers (Boardwalk and Crystal Bay) but also its third tower (Anchor Bay), which is already 84 percent completed.

Substantial factors

With the initiatives of a developer like Federal Land and its continuous concern for the physical well-being of its crew, it's no wonder that their developments progress rapidly and projects are delivered on time.

These health and safety programs may be substantial factors in promoting increased morale and motivation for the crew as well.

Federal Land Inc. is a member of the Metrobank Group of Companies.

Recto cites importance of design

NOTED architect Philip H. Recto stressed the importance for architects to develop their design skills even with the advent of modern computers. They must have the dexterity to sketch and design in front of their clients. This is something the computers cannot perform.

Speaking before the graduating students of the UP College of Architecture during their 43rd recognition rites and commencement exercises held April 27, Recto reminisced about the college where he graduated more than 30 years ago and urged future architects to think of the occupants when designing a building. They must create healthy buildings incorporating green architecture for the benefits of the users.

He lamented that in the '60s and early '70s, we were the leaders in Asia in architecture, interior design, construction, art, music and technology. But now, we are far behind our Asian neighbors. He also urged professors not to disregard the positive effects of constant encouragement and helpful appreciation on the students.

RECTO

Recto expressed his faith in the ability of the Filipino people to overcome trying circumstances. He mentioned that Filipino architects are sought-after everywhere. They are the work horses behind the scene in almost all major architectural firms in the world.

Recto also reported that the Philip Recto awardees Ingrid Araneta, Tisha Cukingnan and Ligaya Maceda are all doing well—working in Singapore and Australia despite the ongoing recession and retrenchment there.

UP architecture dean Prosperidad Luis also announced the winners of the "2003 Philip Recto Design Excellence Awards" for best thesis. They are Ma. Cecilia Gatapia, Laraine Jazel Macapagal and Patricia Mae Tan, best design/planning thesis; Karen Kaye Ang, Ristalle Bautista and Caryl Lesley Tan, best research thesis; Abigail Ladim, Cherisse Santos and Riza May Sta. Teresa, best landscape architecture thesis.

Keeping pests away from homes

By Charles E. Buban

IT is an established fact that most disease causing germs can be transmitted by small animals like rats and insects like mosquitoes and cockroaches.

With the recent scare involving the deadly severe acute respiratory syndrome or SARS, families are becoming even more vigilant against these pests while practicing good hygiene at home.

One company has taken the initiative to promote pest-free homes and environment by offering various modes of services and products while providing one of the most advanced techniques and materials to get rid of pests in households and other business and commercial establishments.

Pest-free environment

"We have committed ourselves to help our customers attain a pest-free environment for their homes. Recent events worldwide have made us wary about keeping our surroundings clean to prevent the proliferation of deadly germs and viruses," said Doy David, president of Pest-Away Exterminating Supply and Services.

To find the best method, David said his company has also partnered with local and foreign firms involved in pest control. Pest-Away has affiliated with and is supplied by locally based Alog & Co. Inc. and US-based Dow AgroSciences.

"Pest-Away is also working nonstop to study the latest pest habits and their biology which will enable us to develop and deliver the most effective and responsible treatment programs for residential, industrial and commercial establishments," said David.

Customized service

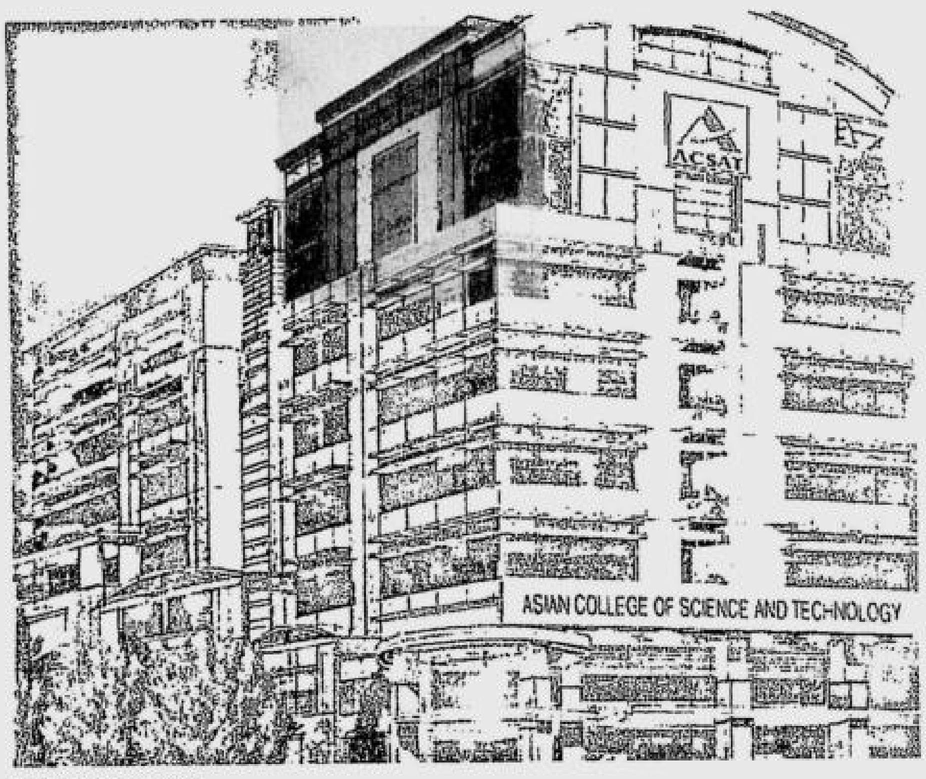
Pest-Away can customize a service plan to suit its customer's needs in dealing with all types of common pest problems such as termites; insects including ants, mosquitoes, flies, cockroaches, fleas; and rodents like mice and rats.

The company has an extensive array of services including:

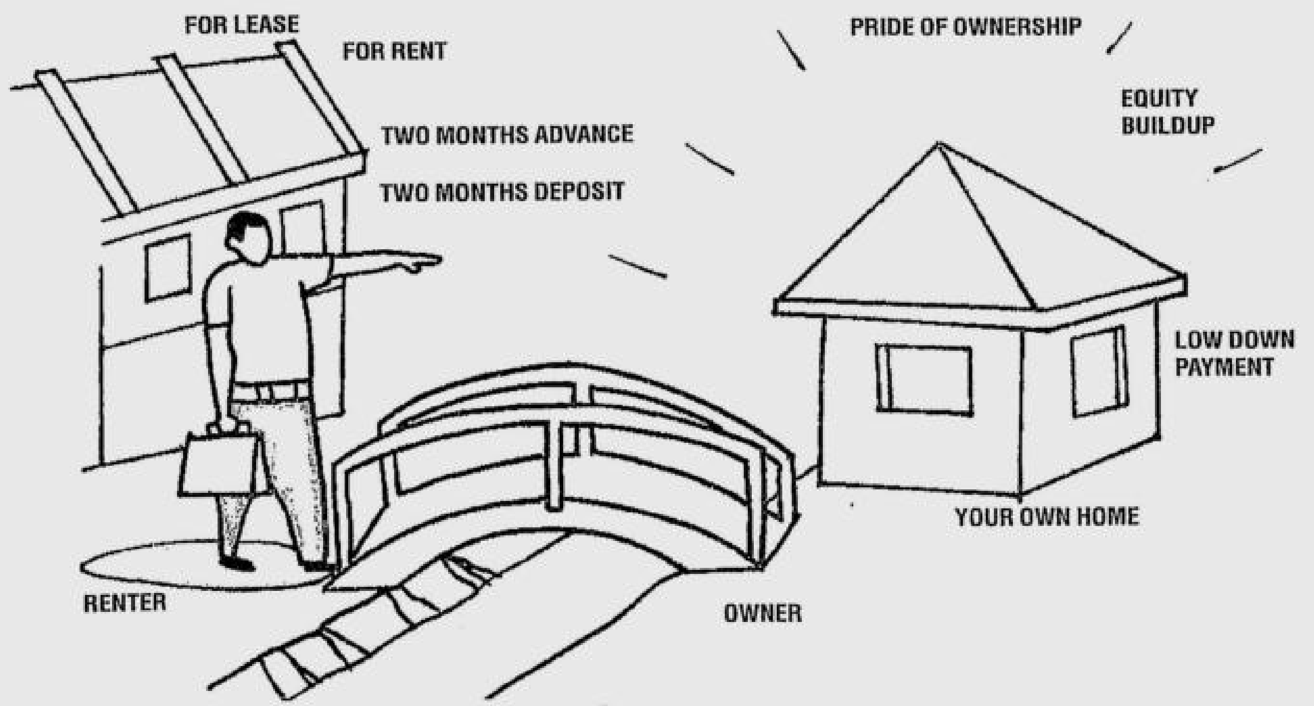
- Aerial disinfection service (virucidal and bactericidal)
- General pest control (Pest A Fog, Perimeter Defense System, Pest-A-Batement, Pest Entrapment, Pest-Away Injection System, Insect Growth Regulator, Mound Demolition)
- Postconstruction termite control (Premise Defense System, Sentricon Colony Elimination System.

"We have different methods and approaches since not all pest problems are alike," David explained.

"These pests we are trying to control and eliminate have been documented to cause a number of epidemics in our history," David explained. "And in any home, one will never feel safe to know these pests are around."



I.T. FACILITY
Soon to open its doors to the local IT sector is the Asian College of Science and Technology (Acsat) Center. Strategically located at 1013 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City, the Acsat Center sits on a 900-square-meter lot. The 8-story center boasts of convenient amenities and innovative facilities for students such as fully air-conditioned and spacious classrooms, 24-hour security camera surveillance, finger scanning entry and a 30-car basement parking with mechanical lift. Acsat SVP Emmanuel Sia said the P60-million IT school building will start offering bachelor degree and two-year vocational courses in June.



Crossing the line from renter to owner

By Alexis A Acacio, Ph.D.

BUILDING DREAMS

EACH one of us dreams to have our own home. When one starts his or her adult life, the first step usually is to rent a small place. As we move on in life and eventually have our own families, we come to a point when we ask ourselves if we are ready to acquire a home of our own. Having rented for so many years, we finally would want to cross the line: from renter to owner.

Being prepared

If your goal is to eventually own a home, there is no better time to start preparing than now. Moving from a renter to an owner requires a lot of will power, energy and above all, honesty in dealing with ones' wants and financial capabilities. You have to sort out what you want, what you need and what you can afford for these can be different from each other. The decision to purchase a home depends a lot on your financial preparedness.

Becoming financially ready

Crunching the numbers is one of the most important steps before deciding to move. As an example, if you are paying P25,000 per month as rent now, and then you may ask how much you may be able to borrow from the bank that will require a monthly payment of P25,000 for the next 15 years. If you borrow P2.3 million at 10 percent fixed interest and would want to pay in equal monthly amortization for 15 years, then your monthly payment would be about P25,000 per month. Simply put, paying a monthly rent of P25,000 for the next 15 years is like paying a P2.3-million loan for a property that you will never own.

In moving from a renter to owner, equity is necessary to pay the down payment for your home. If for example you are buying a P4 million property that has a loan to appraised value ratio of 0.6 (which means that 60 percent of the total appraised value can be borrowed from the bank), then you will have to give out 40 percent or P1.60 million as the equity. Raising the equity can become the biggest hurdle in moving from a renter to owner.

Expected increase in rent

Rent, especially in highly urban areas, will continue to go up to catch up with inflation.

Looking at the long term, the main reason you should buy a home is not to save money today but to save a lot of money and accumulate wealth throughout your entire life.

Real estate provides a hedge against inflation and serves as a vehicle for the continuous accumulation of wealth. If you think that the monthly mortgage payments are huge, your rental payments will come to match them over time.

Other costs to consider

In buying a home, there are other costs to consider and you should be prepared for these. These costs include:

- **Transfer costs**—Purchasing a home requires that you pay the necessary government taxes to register the property in your name.
- **Move-in costs**—Moving into a new home requires a budget for hauling and transferring. New appliances and furniture may also have to be bought.
- **Real property taxes**—As owners of real property, taxes are to be paid on land and its improvements. As a renter, you may not have to worry about these.
- **Maintenance costs**—Depending on your contract with your landlord, you may or may not have to worry about the maintenance of your home. But if you own one, you will have to set aside a budget for maintenance. Maintenance costs may not be as high for a new home but gets larger as the structure grows older.
- **Taxes on your loan**—Interest payments are now charged the value added tax.

Equity buildup

Over time, as you pay your monthly amortization, your equity in your house will continue to increase since your loan balance steadily decreases.

Even if your home does not appreciate (which very rarely happens), you will be able to own a property that is free from any loan obligation.

As renters continue to spend money on the place where they live, homeowners will become richer through the gradual increase in home equity.

Pride of ownership

Having a home provides a lot of intangible benefits and is the dream of almost everyone. It can serve as a proof of the fruits of our labor.

Once you are locked in to a commitment to own a home, you continuously strive to meet the payments regularly. It may be hard at first but after you have adjusted your lifestyle, payments will be easier.

Making the move

Moving from renter to owner takes a lot of courage. Having assessed your real needs and finances it may be the perfect time to own a home now.

If you have raised enough money for the equity, then you have to think about the monthly payments. If you have a regular job and salary, it would be prudent to set aside a total of six months amortization as an "emergency fund" just to cover any unexpected occurrences that would affect your monthly income.

If you are an entrepreneur and your business experiences a lot of ups and downs, then the requirements of your buffer fund may be more.

Not for everyone

Moving from renter to owner may not be for everyone. A reason for not buying or building a home and choosing to rent relates to lifestyle and the profession or job that one has.

If you are always moving because of the nature of your work, then renting may be a better option until you decide to settle in a specific place.

Final note—The down payment may be the biggest obstacle in owning a home and it is wise to start saving now so when the time comes that you have the equity, then you can cross the line from renter to owner.

In borrowing money from the lenders, make sure that you have a healthy credit rating. As long as you have a good track record of paying your debts and obligations on time, then you may be able to borrow the amount that you need to finance your home.

(Alexis A. Acacio is an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines. For comments and advice you may reach him at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.)

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'Tahanang Pinoy' Sundays on ABC 5

LOOKING for homes? Want to redesign your living space? Or perhaps you'd like to know about the different ways you can get a housing loan or finance your existing loans. Bringing together house-hunters, homeowners, real estate developers, interior designers and movers and shakers in the housing industry, "Tahanang Pinoy" is a 30-minute program on ABC 5 every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. It showcases residential property for sale and updates you in the real estate and housing industry.

Facts and tips about the ins and outs of home planning and designing are also a regular feature. Running on its third season presenting the Pinoy lifestyle, it is the first of its kind on local television. Even homemakers can share tips and ideas on home improvement through tahanangpinoy@hotmail.com.

Condo management seminar set May 29-30

A TWO-DAY comprehensive professional development seminar on "condominium management" will be jointly conducted by the Philippine Association of Building Administrators Inc. (Paba) and the Condominium Management Association of the Philippines Inc., in cooperation with the Philippine Institute of Building Management Foundation Inc.

The seminar is slated on May 29 and 30 at 6-9 p.m. at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) Conference Center, J.V. del Rosario Foundation Building, Benavidez corner Trasierra Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

The seminar will be facilitated by the country's top practitioners who are highly recognized and experienced in the building and property management field. For inquiries, call the Paba/CMAP secretariat at 819-2656 and 892-6037.

MEMO OF AGREEMENT SIGNING
Metro Angeles Realtors' Board or Mareb, a brokers network based in Angeles City, signed a memorandum of agreement with Moldex Realty Marketing Inc. during a meeting held recently at the Red Crab Seafood and Steak Restaurant in Clark Field, Pampanga. The MOA underscored Mareb's commitment in achieving sales goals while providing Filipinos with opportunities for home ownership. MRMI's project in Pampanga is Metrogate Angeles, an 87-hectare first-class residential project in Barangay Mining off the North Expressway. MRMI president Editha L. Manansala is shown handing over a symbolic check to Mareb founder Tars Halili, representing an incentive earned for the network's production in 2003. Also shown is GY Yap (left), Mareb past president and Marvin Banting, Mareb incumbent president.

Benjamin Group, AFP-RSBS develop new housing project

BOUYED by the success of its real estate projects in Bulacan, Benjamin Construction Equipment Inc. has forged a joint-venture agreement with AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System for the development of the latter's property in Pandacaqui, Mexico, Pampanga into a self-contained residential subdivision.

The contract was signed by top executives led by BCEI executive vice president Veronica E. Lim and AFP-RSBS president Cesar M. Jayme Jr. at a ceremony held at the New World Hotel in Makati City.

The new project will be known as Benjamin Northville Subdivision. It involves the development of 57 hectares of land to be parceled into affordable residential lots with ample spaces for standard amenities and facilities.

Northville is envisioned to cater to the low- and middle-income bracket of Pampanga, Bulacan and Metro Manila. It also hopes to attract OFW (overseas Filipino workers) buyers from Hong Kong, Macau and Japan.

Both BCEI and AFP-RSBS are confident of the project viability, recognizing the ever-growing demand for housing among the D and E market.

NEW PHASE AT AYALA ALABANG

Market shows keen interest in Tamarind Cove

By Berry P. Marfori
Contributor

MARKET pressure to make available more lots has been intense but Ayala Land no longer has any inventory in the area to appease demand.

After a hiatus of 10 years, property developer Ayala Land Inc. recently began development of the last of its highly successful Ayala Alabang community in Southern Metro Manila.

Overwhelming response

News about the 1.6-hectare joint venture with Bank of the Philippine Islands, was released at the height of the Iraq conflict and its accompanying economic uncertainty. Nevertheless, Ayala Land assistant vice president Bobby Dy discloses that response to the project, designed as a distinct neighborhood, has been overwhelming.

Dy attributes the very warm public response to Tamarind Cove, which is accessible through Tamarind Street, to a number of factors. Foremost among this is the sustained development of Ayala Alabang which has evolved into a self-contained, fully integrated community with its own business district, commercial center, a number of top-rated schools, recreational and entertainment areas. It also remains the only subdivision in Southern Metro Manila with a 24-hour water supply, a testimony to its efficient property management.

Viable community

"Buyers foresee that Ayala Alabang will remain a viable and successful community for a long time to come, so they feel assured their investment in Tamarind Cove will continue to grow," notes Dy. Tamarind Cove will only have 20 lots.

Since it was launched in 1977 at P240 per square meter, lots in Ayala Alabang have appreciated 83 times its original value. Going rates for lots in the community now hover from P18,000 to P22,000 per square meter in the secondary market depending on lot size, location and a number of other factors.

PROPERTY values in Ayala Alabang continue to appreciate primarily because development and upkeep of this Southern Metro Manila community has consistently been sustained. Unsurprising, market response to lots in a new phase being developed by Ayala Land in the community has been overwhelming.

Over the past 25 years, prices in the village did decline as well, particularly during times of political tumult. "However, these declines were more than made up for by steep increases once good times rolled around once more," notes Dy. Because land continues to remain scarce in Metro Manila, it is likely that the upward trend will continue into the future.

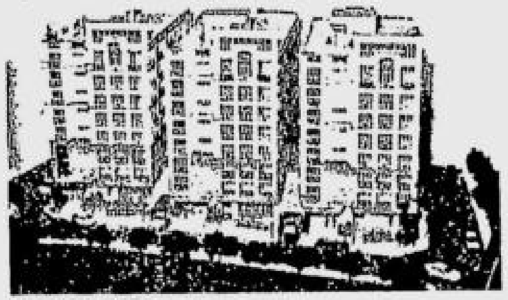
> Lot owners in Tamarind Cove, as the new development is called, will enjoy their own pocket park and amenities

Village within village

Market interest in Tamarind Cove has also been perked by the fact that it is a departure from other phases of the community. Planned on a more intimate scale, the neighborhood with limited access is laid out in a cul-de-sac, has its own pocket park and even extra parking bays exclusively for visitors to the area. "In addition to the fact that it feels like a village within a village, it offers residents more privacy and a higher level of security," says Dy.

At the same time, Tamarind Cove residents will have access to Ayala Alabang's community tennis courts, six basketball courts, swimming pool, and other parks.

Observes Dy: "Land developed by Ayala has consistently been one of the best investment vehicles in the Philippines—a fact which has been borne out by Ayala Alabang." Tamarind Cove is most likely to prove this maxim right.


MYSTICA Towers

First Pag-Ibig project in QC

MYSTICA Towers, three seven-story residential condominium buildings with penthouse, will soon be constructed on Batasan Road, Barangay Batasan Hills, Quezon City. This was known from Asia International Concept and Development Corp. president and CEO Beda R. Aquino.

Mystica Towers boasts of being the first flagship project of the Home Development Mutual Fund under the Pag-Ibig Medium-rise Building Program at the heart of Quezon City. It was formally approved during its 192nd special board meeting held on Dec. 3, 2002 and the MOA signed on Feb. 5, 2003. As a duly accredited project with Pag-Ibig, the condominium buyer is only obliged to shell out the equity (down payment or initial investment) which can be repaid without interest during the construction period.

With a total area of 1,854 square meters, Mystica Towers will rise at the site of the Doña Ana Village and will benefit from the recent widening of the San Mateo-Batasan Road, a 20-meter-wide highway connecting Quezon City to San Mateo, Rizal.

Asia International Concept and Development, the owner-developer of the project, intends to participate in the implementation of the master development plan prepared for the subdivision complex by architect Renato L. Punzalan to redevelop the entire subdivision into a mixed residential and industrial complex with a private school, fitness center, hostel, playground and multipurpose clubhouse.

Residents of Mystica Towers will enjoy having elevators for each tower, a standby generator, a fire detection and alarm system, elevated water tank, 24-hour association security, an entry phone system for penthouse units, secured basement parking and landscaped gardens.

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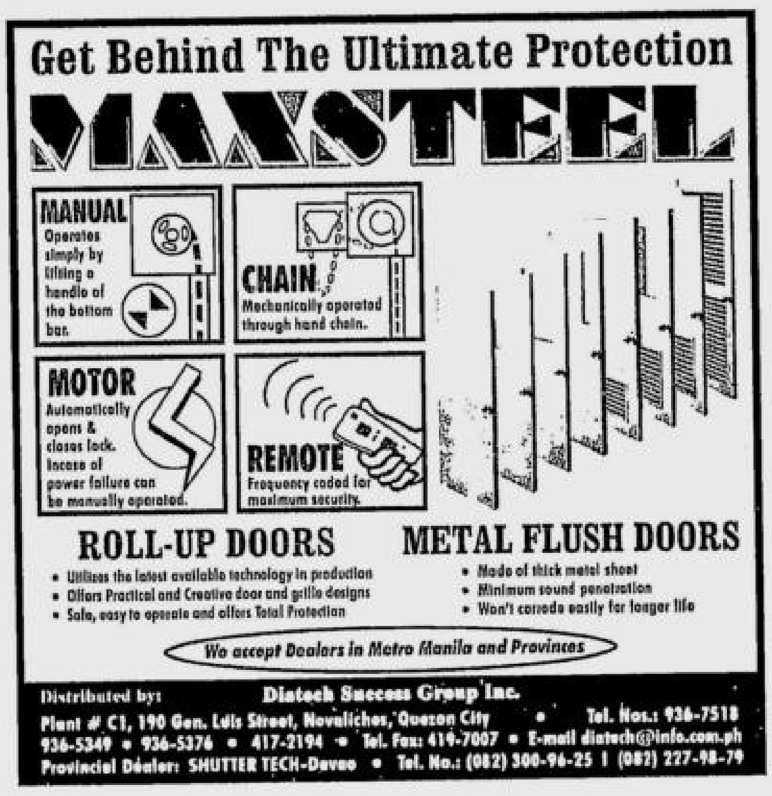
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Credit card firms start charging VAT

By Elena R. Torrijos

CREDIT card companies said they had started charging their clients the 10-percent value-added tax on annual fees and revolving credit card purchases.

This was contained in statements of account sent to cardholders by the credit card units of Bank of the Philippine Islands and Citibank N.A.

Citibank N.A. said it would "adjust interest and fees to include the 10-percent VAT effective April 1."

The bank also said it reserved the right to collect VAT for transactions retroactive to the start of this year.

BPI, for its part, pointed out to cardholders that VAT-registered cardholders could avail themselves of input tax credits on the 10-percent VAT on the interest slapped on credit card purchases.

Other credit card companies are seen to follow suit.

An industry source said that credit card holders who "revolve" their purchases, or those who pay their outstanding bill only partially, would likely be the hardest hit by the VAT. The balance of the bill is subject to interest and therefore to the VAT.

In general, 60 percent to 70 percent of credit cardholders pay on installment and only about 30 percent to 40 percent pay in full on or before due date.

The industry source, however, said that people who revolve their credits were expected to continue using their cards although some might scale down their purchases due to higher tax costs.

Most credit card companies currently charge 2.5 percent to 3 percent monthly in effective interest rate.

The average net receivables of credit card companies run to the billions of pesos.

In the meantime, banks and other financial institutions are asking Congress to pass a bill that will either defer or abolish the 10-percent VAT on the financial sector.

Cera charges refund sought

CONSUMER welfare advocates yesterday pushed for the inclusion of P1.1 billion in currency exchange rate adjustment (Cera) charges in Manila Electric Co.'s P30-billion refund as the Energy Regulatory Commission deliberated on the utility's proposal on the mode of the refund's implementation.

Renato Reyes Jr., spokesperson for the People Opposed to Warrantless Electricity Rates, said the Cera should be part of the refund since this was computed based on Meralco's basic charge.

"If there was an overcharging in the basic charge, it follows that Meralco had also overcharged with the Cera," Reyes said in an interview. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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Immune system protection for athletes

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

SINCE the late '70s, numerous studies involving competitive athletes from different sports have documented that heavy athletic training can increase the risk of catching colds and flu.

Meanwhile, studies have also found that moderate exercise decreases the risk of upper respiratory tract infections and shortens the duration and severity of symptoms should the exerciser catch a cold or flu.

What's an athlete to do? Moderate intensity training will not get them the gold medal. They have to train hard to make it to first place.

How much training pushes an athlete over the edge depends on the athlete's current state of health, nutrition, stress and sleep patterns.

A study titled "Exercise, Immunity and Susceptibility to Infection" that was published in the 1999 Physician and Sports Medicine Journal (PSMJ) also pointed out that athletes face situations not usually experienced by regular exercisers, which makes them more vulnerable to infections.

Since they compete in many different local and international competitions, athletes are exposed to a greater range of infected persons and unfamiliar microorganisms. They also have to contend with environmental stressors that adversely affect the immune system like extreme cold or heat, pollution, high altitudes, travel fatigue, jet lag and sleep deprivation (especially during long and demanding events like the Tour de France).

Not only do athletes have to deal with the psychological pressure of competition but just being in a strange environment can also trigger mental and emotional stress, which in turn can affect the immune system.

Clearly, athletes have to take extraordinary measures to protect their health. Here are recommendations based on the PSMJ study and other research.

Minimize exposure

Avoid close contact with people who have a cold before, during and after competition. Wash hands carefully before meals and avoid rubbing the eyes or nose with unwashed hands.

Watch out for warning signs of overtraining

Classic symptoms are sleeplessness, excessive fatigue, chronic muscle soreness, declining performance levels, moodiness, increased resting heart rate, irritability, inability to concentrate, constant colds and flu.

Keep a training log

Keeping a detailed record of training volume and intensity as well as documenting any physical and psychological symptoms will help athletes and their coaches walk the tightrope between training hard and overtraining.

Reduce stress

Athletes need to realize that life-related stressors like marital problems and job anxieties coupled with intense training schedules can make them more prone to infections. During prolonged periods of mental and emotional stress, training intensity may need to be lowered. Having a mentor or close friend to talk to can help reduce stress levels even if the situation causing the stress is still there. Athletes can be so focused on their goals that they don't make time for close social contact.

Consider immunotherapy

The scientists behind the PSMJ study recommend that athletes with a low level of serum immunoglobulins be given monthly injections of human immunoglobulins to reduce the severity of any contracted disease. They also suggest that all athletes competing internationally should be inoculated against whatever virus is prevalent in that area.

Another suggestion from a different study is that athletes should consider getting the flu vaccine, which will protect them from 90 dif-

IMMUNE/ C2

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DIABETES:
Life Changes for the Better

Discovering the New You
Diabetes seems to rewrite life for most people. Self-care comes with a little shedding of the old you. Elaine, who used to food binge when stressed, now diligently follows a meal plan after being diagnosed with diabetes. Alan, also a diabetic, has abandoned the couch and regularly brisk-walks 30-45 minutes, three times a week.

What compels diabetics to be in control of their condition?
To stay as far away from the following complications as their physical, mental and emotional strength would allow them:
- Eye disease (can lead to loss of vision or even blindness)
- Kidney failure
- Heart disease
- Nerve damage (may cause a loss of feeling or pain in the hands, feet, legs, or other parts of the body)
- Stroke

Diabetes is a high maintenance condition. According to Dr. Teresa Plata Que, Vice President of the Philippine Diabetes Association, "the pillars of diabetes management are home glucose monitoring, diet, exercise, medication and patient education." Indeed, self-care is a huge responsibility.

Self-care is self-control as it is self-discovery.

Blood Sugar Monitoring: A Test of Discipline
Regular monitoring of your blood sugar level is necessary to know how your food intake, exercise, stress and medication affect your glucose level.

The results are used to make adjustments in insulin, diet or activity. There's the hemoglobin A1c test which measures your blood sugar control over the last 3 months.

Then there's the finger-stick test you can do on your own using a blood glucose meter. It measures your blood sugar at the time you test.

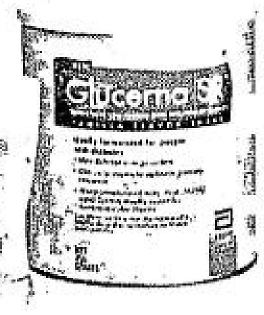
A Change in Diet: A Change of Heart
With the help of her doctor and a dietician, Elaine understood the value of sticking to her meal plan. A meal plan shows you what to eat and how much of it you can have in a day. Little by little she appreciated the following principles:
- The more carbohydrates you eat, the higher your blood sugar gets.
- If you go beyond the amount of food recommended in your meal plan, your blood sugar goes up.
- Calories, too, affect your blood sugar level so it is important to count your caloric intake.
- Eating small meals, spaced several hours apart, can also help maintain your glucose levels.

Moreover, Dr. Que shares that complex carbohydrates are preferred over simple carbohydrates. Carbohydrates provide energy and sources of which are whole grains, fruits and vegetables. She also recommends food that are high in fiber, low in fat and more of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. The diet must also be in proportion with the intake of protein and other fats.

Medication: Cures Delinquency
Realizing that taking the prescribed medicine for diabetes is key to controlling it for life, there is no room to make lame excuses for not sticking to it.

Living with Diabetes and the New You
Diabetes is life altering. However, the changes do not only affect your activities. The changes that are equally important are those you make in yourself. Living with diabetes and learning more about it leads to discovering a better you — more determined, focused, responsible and yes, a healthier you!

To help you stay healthy is Glucerna SR! Glucerna SR is a convenient low-calorie meal or snack replacement for diabetics complete with all essential vitamins and minerals. SR stands for slow release carbohydrate that results in a lower blood glucose level. The fat formulation is high in Monounsaturated Fatty Acids that help keep lipid levels in check and provide other benefits for cardiac health. It is also lactose-free and gluten-free with soluble fiber content that is healthy for the gut. Glucerna SR is available in delicious buttery caramel vanilla flavor.



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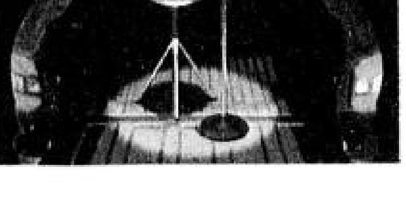


BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Immune system protection for athletes

From page C1

Athletes are more vulnerable to infections than regular exercisers

ferent types of flu for 12 months. Take note that this will not protect an athlete from SARS but will at least prevent unnecessary downtime from catching ordinary flu.

Avoid very low-fat diets

A University of Buffalo study presented at the 1999 International Society for Exercise and Immunology Symposium reported that low-fat diets (17 percent fat) weakened the immune system of runners compared to medium- and high-fat diets (32 percent and 41 percent, respectively). The study was done on male and female competitive runners who trained 40 miles a week. They followed their normal diets for one month, and then did one month each of the low, moderate, and high-fat diets. In all cases, protein was kept to 15 percent and carbohydrates made up the difference. The study found that levels of natural killer cells were more than double when the athletes were on higher-fat diets compared to low-fat diets. A previous study by the same university found that runners had better endurance and performance with higher fat percentages in their diet.

Eat properly

Common nutritional deficiencies that have been reported include essential fatty acids, folic acid, Vitamins B6, C, and E. A multivitamin containing the minerals zinc and selenium are a relatively cheap form of insurance for the immune system but athletes (and everyone else for that matter) should aim to get the bulk of their vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals from real food the way nature intended. Ideally, an athlete's diet should be under the supervision of an experienced sports nutrition dietician.

Avoid crash dieting

Athletes can be just as tempted to go on a crash diet as regular exercisers especially after the off-season when lack of exercise and a relaxation of dietary discipline can lead to weight gain. The American Council on Exercise says low-calorie diets, long-term fasting, and rapid weight loss have been shown to impair immune function. The ACE further adds that losing weight while training heavily is not good for the immune system.

I know of a female competitive body builder who was constantly coming down with colds and flu because she was training hard and dieting drastically. Eventually, she came down with pneumonia. Her immune system was so worn-out that it took several months for her to fully recover. Ironically, she was strong on the outside but weak on the inside.

Know when to stop training

Athletes and coaches should learn to distinguish between above-the-neck and below-the-neck symptoms of colds and flu. An athlete can still train with a stuffy nose by lowering training intensity and taking a non-drowsy decongestant during the day and an antihistamine at night. However, if the athlete has a cough, fever, chills, joint and muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, vomiting or diarrhea, training should be stopped until the symptoms have disappeared. Some experts recommend waiting for two weeks before training is continued. Training with systemic or below-the-neck symptoms can cause serious medical problems and a rare but possible danger is dying from a cardiac arrest during exercise due to viral myocarditis (viral inflammation of the heart muscle).

Get enough rest and sleep

Getting enough rest and sleep are extremely important to an athlete's immune system as well as his or her quality of performance. Infection-fighting cells are markedly affected by even one night of lack of sleep.

The body needs time to recover from the intensity of hard training. The harder you train, the more sleep and rest you need to recover. Alternate between light and heavy days of training. Have at least one full rest day a week.

Don't burn the candle on both ends by training hard during the day and then partying the night away. Teenage athletes, especially, are prone to thinking they are invincible because of the seemingly boundless energy their youth has bestowed upon them.

Consider changing time of training

A study published this year in the British Journal of Sports Medicine found that early morning might not be the best time for athletes to do heavy training if they have just recovered from an illness or injury or they are feeling rundown.

Researchers found that cortisol levels are naturally at their highest in the morning while immunoglobulin A (IgA) levels are at their lowest. Cortisol is a stress hormone that is known to be an immune system suppressor while IgA, a chemical found in saliva and mucus, destroys airborne viruses and bacteria.

Under the circumstances mentioned above, heavy early morning workouts can make athletes more vulnerable to infectious diseases. The study findings should not be applied to the average exerciser who works out in the early morning because other studies have found that moderate exercise increases or has no effect on IgA levels.

Watch "In Fitness and In Health" Mondays-Fridays on Studio 23 from 6-6:30 a.m. and Net25 from 6-6:30 p.m.

For past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com

–EXERCISE OF THE WEEK–

The tree

THIS yoga-inspired exercise strengthens legs and improves balance.

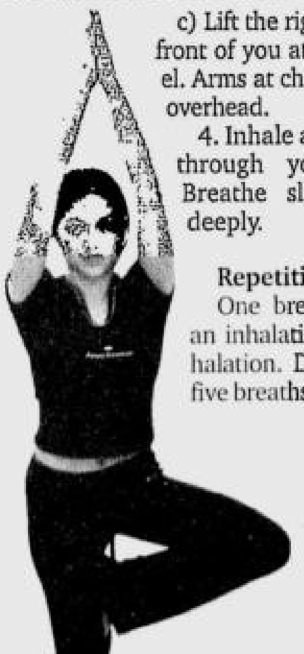
Equipment:
None

Exercise technique:

1. Stand with your feet together. Wiggle your toes to spread them apart so you get a better grip on the floor with your feet.
2. Bend your right knee and place the sole of your right foot on the inner thigh of your left leg.
3. Place your palms together in the middle of your chest then lift your arms overhead.
4. Hold the position for the desired length of time.
5. Repeat on the other side.

Performance tips:

1. Avoid pushing the sole of the foot into the inner thigh because this will throw your hips and spine out of alignment. Instead pull up tall so that the top of your hipbones is level.
2. If keeping your palms together overhead bothers your shoulders, keep your arms at chest level or keep your arms apart overhead.
3. If you have never done this exercise, here are several ways to modify it, going from easier to harder.
   a) Place the ball of your right foot on the floor beside your left foot. Arms at chest level.
   b) Lift the right foot a few inches off the floor and hold it there. Arms at chest level.
   c) Lift the right knee in front of you at waist level. Arms at chest level or overhead.
4. Inhale and exhale through your nose. Breathe slowly and deeply.



Repetitions
One breath equals an inhalation and exhalation. Do three to five breaths per side.

DAILY CROSSWORD

You're held captive at Cebu airport. A two-hour delay.

Enough time to wander aimlessly through the hallways

and read every newspaper you can lay your hands on.

Is this the most you can make out of idle time?

(They desperately need you to upload your photographs to meet the newspaper deadline in Manila.)

Mental technique to boost immune system

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

THE PUBLIC fear caused by the newly discovered killer disease SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) has spawned a lot of suggestions to fight it, ranging from the ridiculous to the most practical.

Last year, at the height of the Ebola virus outbreak in other parts of the world, we received a message from the spirit world advising us how to protect ourselves from it by a simple mental technique. I feel that the suggestion made by that unknown entity can also be used to protect us from SARS.

When asked what this mental technique was, the spirit, speaking through a medium, said that it is what I teach in my seminar on ESP development, namely, meditation to cleanse, balance and activate the seven chakras or psychic centers of man.

It was a surprise to all of us in the group who were present at that time, specially for me. It never occurred to me that the chakra meditation technique can also boost the immune system.

Simple strategy

The function of the immune system is to defend the body against invaders, such as microbes or germs. Its strategy is simple: to recognize the enemy, mobilize forces and then attack.

At first, I thought this was another one of those unexplainable spirit messages that defies logic. But when I started analyzing what the chakras represent in terms of human anatomy, the whole thing made a lot of sense.

Although the chakras belong to the subtle energy body of man and not to his physical anatomy, each of them has a corresponding counterpart in the physical body, specifically in the endocrine system.

The endocrine system is composed of ductless glands that secrete their chemical substances directly into the blood that flows through them. According to one book of anatomy, "The ductless or endocrine glands do not form a well-unified system in a structural sense, scattered as they are throughout many parts of the body. But the substances they secrete, the hormones, do exert a considerable welding influence on many vital activities."

By meditating on these chakras and focusing our mind on their corresponding physical counterparts, i.e. on the endocrine glands, as balls of colored lights, we are in effect stimulating and boosting their activities. The following is one simple way to do this.

Holistic approach

Let us begin with the root or base chakra, which in the physical body is located at the base of the spine. Imagine a red ball of light energizing this area. After a few seconds, it disappears and a second ball of light, colored orange, appears in the genital region, corresponding to the gonads in men or ovaries in women, energizing the area. After it dissipates, a third ball of light, colored yellow, appears in the stomach region (corresponding to the pancreas) energizing it. Then in the heart region, corresponding to the thymus gland, a green ball of light appears energizing this area. When it dissipates, a blue ball of light then appears in the throat (corresponding to the thyroid glands), energizing it. The violet ball of light appears between the eyebrows (corresponding to the pituitary gland). And when it disappears, it is replaced finally by a violet ball of light on top of the head, corresponding to the pineal gland. When you meditate on all these rainbow colors lighting up your chakras aligned with your spinal column, you are actually boosting your immune system to fight invading microorganisms.

If you combine the above meditation technique with the physical suggestions released by the Department of Health to guard against SARS, you will have a better chance of protecting yourself not only against this but also against other diseases. A holistic approach to health is now becoming accepted by the medical community.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City. Tel. nos.: 810-7245 or 892-6806 or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my DZMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

The technique includes meditation to cleanse and balance and activate the 7 psychic centers of man

Free summer camp for families

DZMM and Eli Lilly Philippines will hold the 3rd Emergency Expo and Family Summer Camp on May 17 and 18 at Camp Aguinaldo grounds in Quezon City.

This free two-day summer camp is open to the first 100 families of three or four who will register. The camp is specially designed to train family members in handling emergency and catastrophic situations which includes emergency skills training, drills and competition and even a peak into the skill of bomb detection.

Families, specifically couples who are the binding force in the family, will take part in an obstacle-filled 3K walkathon; a special film screening of "The Story of Us," a fun "how-well-do-you-know-your-spouse" contest plus other high-energy rescue and family group games.

At stake for the Best Family are cash prizes worth P10,000 for second runner-up, P15,000 for first runner-up and P20,000 for the winning family. Special awards will also be given to winning couples in the 3K walkathon.

DZMM, ABS-CBN's AM station, has been advocating public preparedness in emergencies or disasters for several years now.

Eli Lilly and Company, mother company of Eli Lilly Philippines, is one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies.

Free medical check-ups will be done for participating families, which include blood pressure check, DEXA test and blood sugar/diabetes test.

Call 924-4101 local 5674 or 924-2615 and register at DZMM Public Service Center, ABS-CBN Broadcast Center, Quezon City. Registration is extended until May 14.

Lecture on Parkinson's disease

THE PARKINSON'S Support Group of the Philippines (PSGP) Foundation will be holding its next meeting on May 25, 12:30 p.m. at the 14th floor auditorium of Cathedral Heights Building Complex (CHBC) South Tower of St. Luke's. The meeting is free and open to the public.

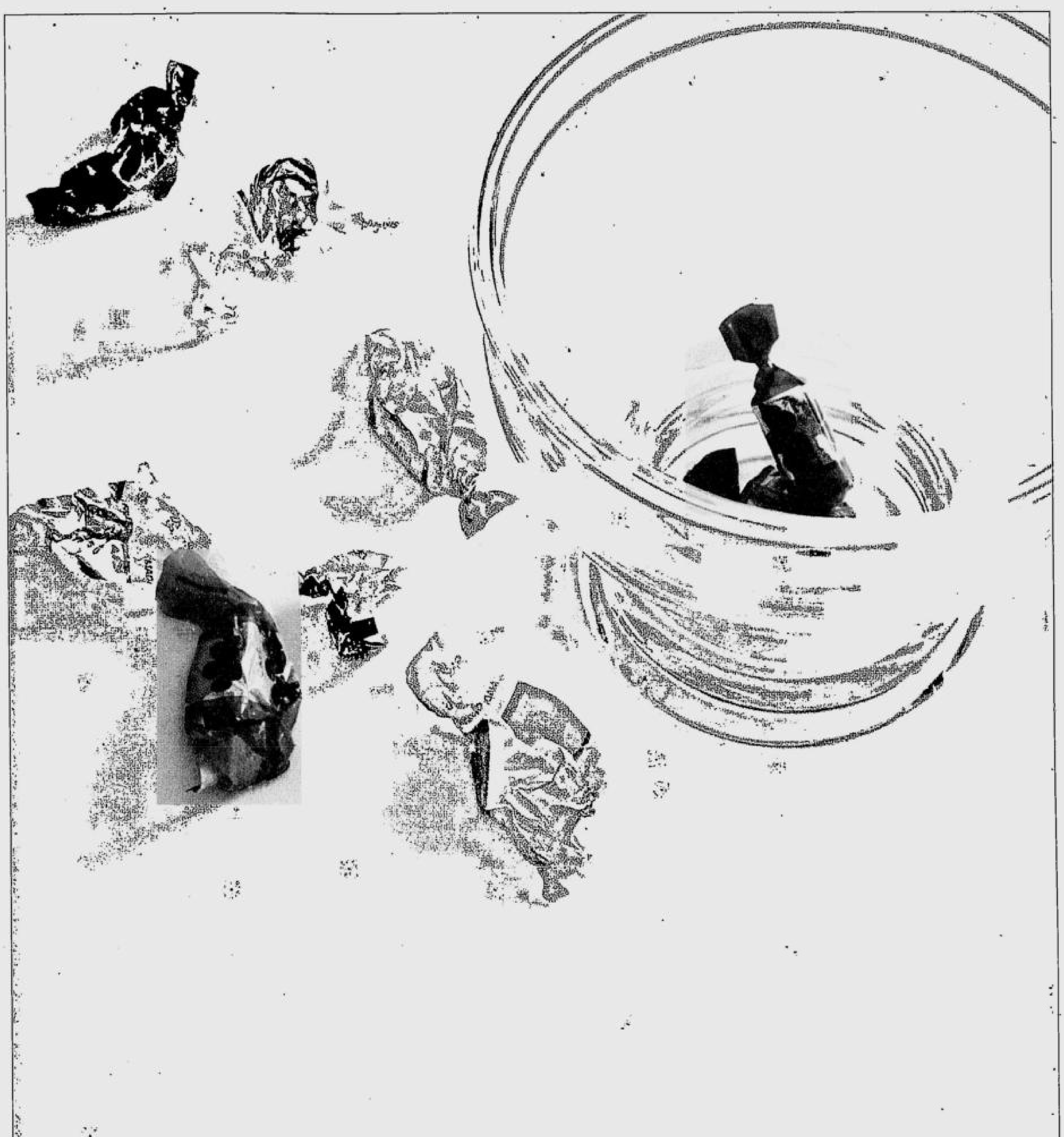
The PSGP was founded in 1999, and aims to provide families and patients with Parkinson's disease, parkinsonism, tremor, or dystonia with information about their affliction. It also acts as a venue for interaction with other families and patients, exchange of experience and knowledge, and finding support among each other. The PSGP has biannual meetings. In the upcoming meeting, a lecture on the latest medical and surgical updates will be given on Parkinson's disease, tremor and dystonia by Dr. Virgilio Gerald Evidente, movement disorders specialist visiting from the US. Call 723-0301 local 3101 or 727-5552.

An anti-SARS product?

A FILIPINO from Tarlac City thinks he may have a promising response to the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that has become a serious problem in several Asian and western countries.

Antonio R. Agustin, who has been conducting research on the medicinal values of nata de coco extract, claims his Boston-C preparation has already helped patients suffering from other diseases.

Agustin has invited representatives of foreign embassies in Manila to visit his farm/laboratory and to get free samples of Boston-C. The farm is at 229 Maligaya, San Miguel, Tarlac City, tel. no. (0917) 253-1848.



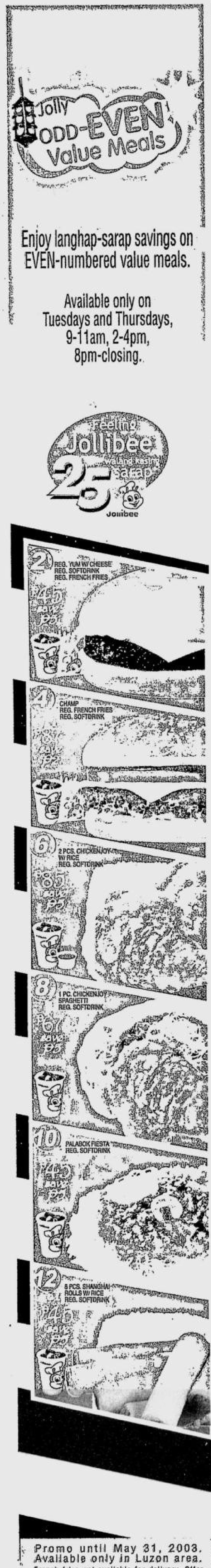
12:00 noon.

Perfect time to join her shopping for those shoes she absolutely must have.

You know it could take a while for her to choose.

Is this how you spend your idle time?

(While she tries them all on, why not go online and see if the Los Angeles Lakers can make it beyond the NBA semi-finals?)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Foods that poison us

Inside Out

Cory Quirino

Between fresh, organic food and food that's been artificially processed, always go for the healthy choice

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

THERE is no life without food. Foods are the raw materials that provide energy for the 60 trillion cells that make up the human body. Each cell is a mini-universe, and the chemical reactions that take place in our bodies every minute depend on food, specifically the kinds of food that we consume.

Substances in food have an influence on nearly every imaginable health condition we find ourselves in.

Alarming research

A primary contributing factor to many of our modern diseases is our eating of processed, low-fiber, low-nutrition foods. This has led in recent times to a rise in illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and obesity.

Most of our food supply is made up of malnourished plants that were fed limited nutrients from artificial fertilizers and sprayed with toxic pesticides. According to a US consumer guide, over 140 drugs (including antibiotics, stimulants, tranquilizers and pesticides) have been identified as likely to leave residues in meat and poultry. Of these, 42 are suspected human carcinogens.

Also, approximately 14 percent of all meat and poultry sold may contain illegal amounts of these chemicals: artificial colors, nitrates/nitrosamines, pesticide residues, plastic residues, and polyethylene/polystyrene.

Arsenic is used in 90 percent of all chicken feed, and diethyl stilbesterol (DES) in 80-85 percent of all beef-cattle and lamb feed.

Fish is not spared from chemical exposure. Farmed fish are not as healthy as wild fish. They are fed drugs to prevent diseases that may result from overcrowding in pens. However, studies on wild fish and seafood have also showed traces of toxic chemicals such as benzyl alcohol/sodium benzoate/hydrogen peroxide and nitrates/nitrosamines, due to the polluted waters these fish live in.

Hazards to health

Would you rather have a body built from pesticide-contaminated, artificially colored or flavored, processed and preserved food? Or from luscious, sun-ripened, organically grown fresh vegetables and fruits?

A number of popular food additives and preservation techniques are now known to cause ill effects, among them:

Artificial colors and preservatives. Because food processing removes vital nutrients, artificial ingredients are often added to make fruits and produce more palatable and extend their shelf life. There are over 8,000 food additives used today; probably only 10 percent have been assessed as to their impact on human health.

Dr. Benjamin Eishoff of the Institute of Nutritional Studies in California once did an experiment on rats. He gave them doses of the food additives red dye #2 sodium cyclamate and polyoxyethelene sorbitan monostearate. The rats died in two weeks.

Irradiation. Certain foods like spices are irradiated, a process whereby food is zapped with radiation sixty million times stronger than that of a chest x-ray to kill bacteria and insects. While it doesn't make the food radioactive, irradiation alters the chemical structure of the food.

Start reading labels! Because labeling laws worldwide are not strictly regulated, it is difficult to determine every time exactly what ingredients went into the products you are buying. Be aware and informed. Get into the habit of reading the product's content label and ingredient list. If the list contains such words as BHA-BHT, MSG/seasonings/flavorings, nitrates, nitrites, coloring, hydrogenated oils and preservatives, think twice before buying the product. If you decide to buy it nonetheless, know that there may be health risks involved.

Most manufacturers do claim that even if there are chemicals used in their products, these are safe for human consumption and used within tolerable limits. Still, it's better to be safe and not risk it.

What is safe to eat?

Before buying a product, find out who the supplier or producer is. If the company is reputable, then follow your better judgment. If you have doubts, call up the manufacturer and ask to talk to the quality control department.

When it comes to fish and seafood, buy deep-ocean fish like tuna, herring, sardine, swordfish, pompano, bluefish, marlin, red/yellow tail snapper, squid and octopus. Avoid farmed fish if you can, unless you know the grower or breeder.

With meat or poultry, avoid eating the liver, sweet breads and internal organs, because these are where toxic substances are concentrated.

Go for organic fruits and vegetables, those that are grown without the use of chemicals, pesticides and fertilizers. Organic farming is fast becoming popular in the Philippines. Organic items are now available in supermarkets, and weekly organic markets are being held in and around Metro Manila. (Call 853-1772 for more information). You may also want to grow your own vegetables.

Food for the skin and well-being. Gather a bunch of herbs of your choice: peppermint, basil, oregano, etc. Throw into a tub of hot water, then ease yourself in. Stay in the bath for 5-7 minutes. Beside you, have a separate cup of hot water with the same herb you have chosen to bathe in. Sip gently. Relax. Allow the steam to penetrate your facial skin too, for a quick facial steam bath. If you don't have a bath tub, you can pour the herbal rinse all over your body from a pail.

Food for the soul. Let your thoughts wander while you are bathing. Then, pluck a thought from your mind and project it onto the water. See it reflected on the water's surface. If you can imagine it, you can become it.

Love and light!

Wellness Directory: Dr. Alejandro Ortigas, Allergy Immunologist, St. Luke's Hospital; Yoga-Ravi Singh, tel. 843-6142.

Portions excerpted from: "Nutrition Almanac," Lavon J. Dunne; "Organic & Whole Foods," Konemann; "Non-Toxic, Natural & Earthwise," Debra Lynn Dadd

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Seminar on self-enhancement

ONE Woman Show Inc. and Cosmopolitan Magazine bring back its self-improvement seminar entitled "Cosmo Goes To Work." This one-day free seminar for women is slated on May 24, 8 a.m.-5 p.m,. at the Ballroom of Galleria Suites.

Ladies who are 19-35 years old are invited to attend this event. A group of speakers have been invited to share their expertise on significant topics. Model and image enhancement expert Olen Lim will conduct an in-depth discussion on how women can improve their poise, and make a great first impression. Taekwondo champion Monsour del Rosario will teach basic self-defense techniques while fitness experts Paolo Villaroel and Cheska Tiu-Laurel will demonstrate Pilates exercises with the use of a ball. Beauty expert Lala Flores will share her expertise on proper skincare and makeup application using Avon Colors. Seventeen Philippines' editor-in-chief Maya Calica will teach participants how they can improve their outlook in life during her "Feeling Good" segment. Columnist Stephanie Dychiu will share tips on how to manage finances and Prof. Meg Doromal will give pointers on how to communicate effectively. There will also be a fashion presentation featuring the latest office apparel of Blackshop.

To join this informative seminar, just write your name, age, occupation, office address, telephone and cellphone numbers and e-mail address on a piece of paper and send it to Cosmo Goes To Work, Summit Media c/o Marketing 1, Level 1 Robinsons Galleria Mall Edsa corner Ortigas Ave.; or fax it to 637-2206. You can also e-mail it to cosmopromos@summitmedia.com.ph or fill up the web form at www.femalenetwork.com/cgtw. Deadline for submission is on May 21.

MODEL and image enhancement expert Olen Lim

FITNESS experts Paolo Villaroel and Cheska Tiu-Laurel, and taekwondo champion Monsour del Rosario

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Anti-aging society holds 2nd convention

THE PHILIPPINE Anti-Aging Medical Society Inc. (PAAMS) will hold its second scientific convention at Megatrade Hall 2, 5/L SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, on May 24, 1-6 p.m.

This is in line with the three-day festival, dubbed "A World of Beauty," where experts and consultants on the different aspects of health and beauty will also be on hand to share their knowledge, products and services.

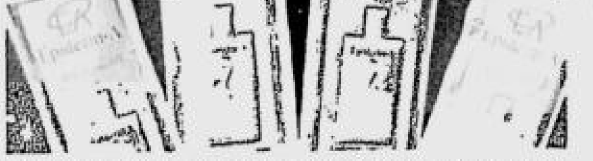
PAAMS, an association of 60 medical practitioners in the field of dermatology, plastic surgery, family medicine and occupational medicine, recently held its first scientific convention at PMA Auditorium. Advances in bariatric surgery and dermatology were among the topics discussed.

Dr. Joel Mendez, PAAMS president, and Ernesto Canlas, convention chair, hope that the public and fellow medical practitioners will continue to benefit from the second round of scientific lectures on anti-aging research and findings.

Call 840-2128 or 0917-8482675.

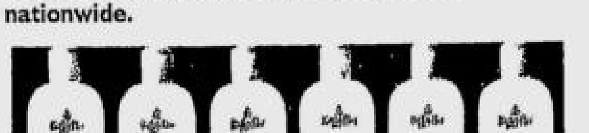
Weekly Dosage

M-POWER Enterprises, Inc. offers Lady E Papaya Transparent Soap. It moisturizes dull, dry and prematurely aged skin. It helps protect the skin from pimples, skin blemishes and discoloration. Available at all leading groceries and supermarkets nationwide.



SKIN-FRIENDLY Epiderm-A Whitening Lotion now comes in budget-friendly sachets. It keeps skin hydrated and it also works to give you fairer, more radiant complexion. The fruit extracts in Epiderm-A help speed up the whitening process. Available in supermarkets, groceries and *sari-sari* stores nationwide.

Summer's Eve
SUMMER'S Eve Feminine Cleansing Cloths contain gentle ingredients at the lowest effective concentration for added protection of feminine skin. It's gentle and hypo-allergenic. Summer's Eve line includes: Summer's Even Feminine Wash for Normal Skin and Summer's Even Feminine Wash for Sensitive Skin.


BABYFLO Cologne by Philusa Corporation and manufactured by Ocean Deep Industries has six variants: Cool Bloom, Sweet Breeze, Purple Mist, Pink Fantasy, Green Tea and Summer Blossoms to give you a scent boost for all-over confidence.

LIFESTYL fitness

Natural lifestyle is best defense against 'killers'

By Cesar C. Villariba
Contributor

THE "NATURAL" movement seems to prosper in times of living dangerously. People, frustrated at being powerless against disease and terror, focus on the one thing they can control—what they eat and think.

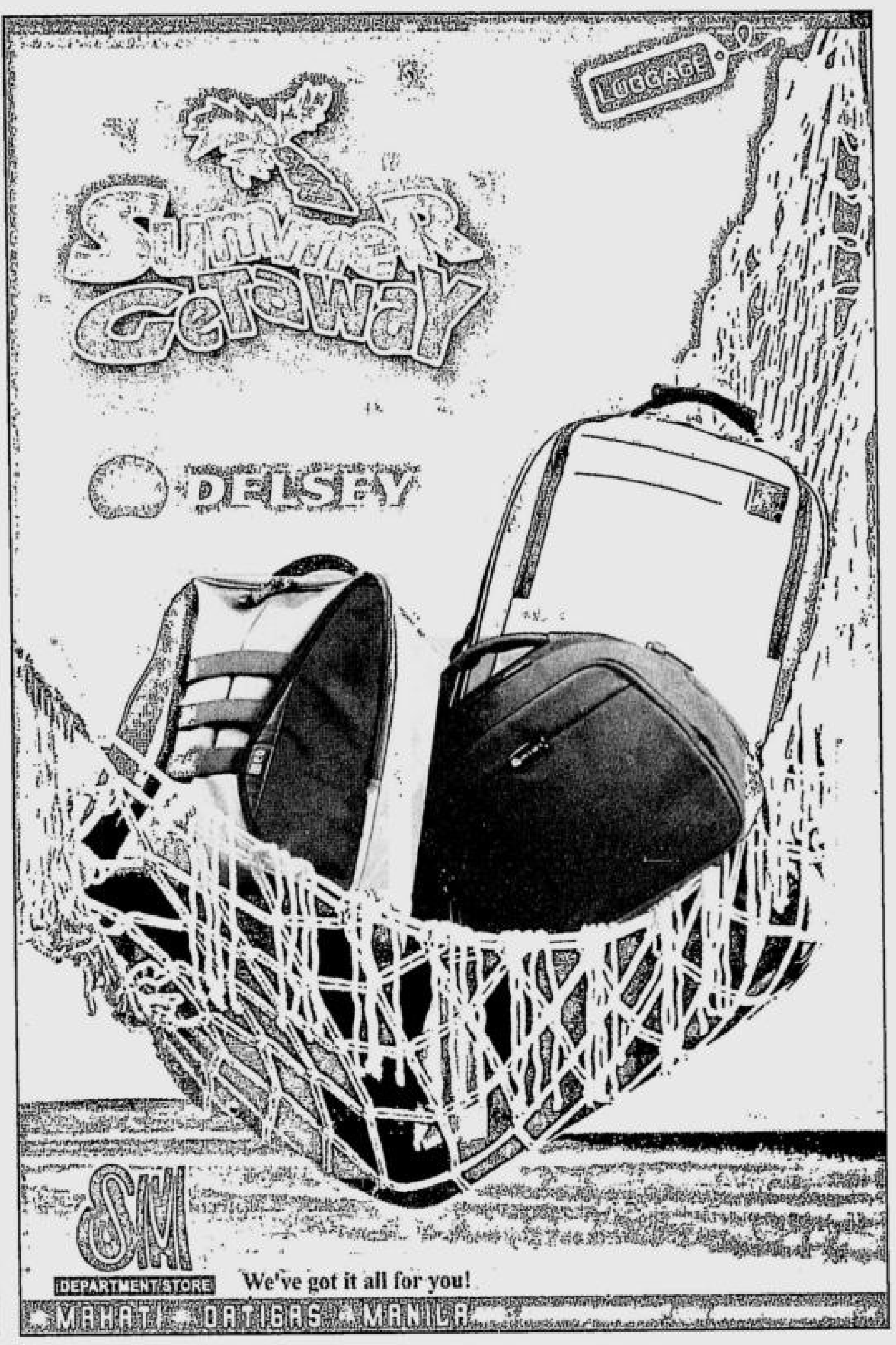
A new food trend emerged as a health fix in these toxic times—raw, organic and plant food-based.

Searching for safe food, sun-cooked, natural and raw, the 32-year-old David Wolfe, considered by his peers to be America's foremost authority on natural nutrition, was on his way to Bali but ended up in Batangas instead.

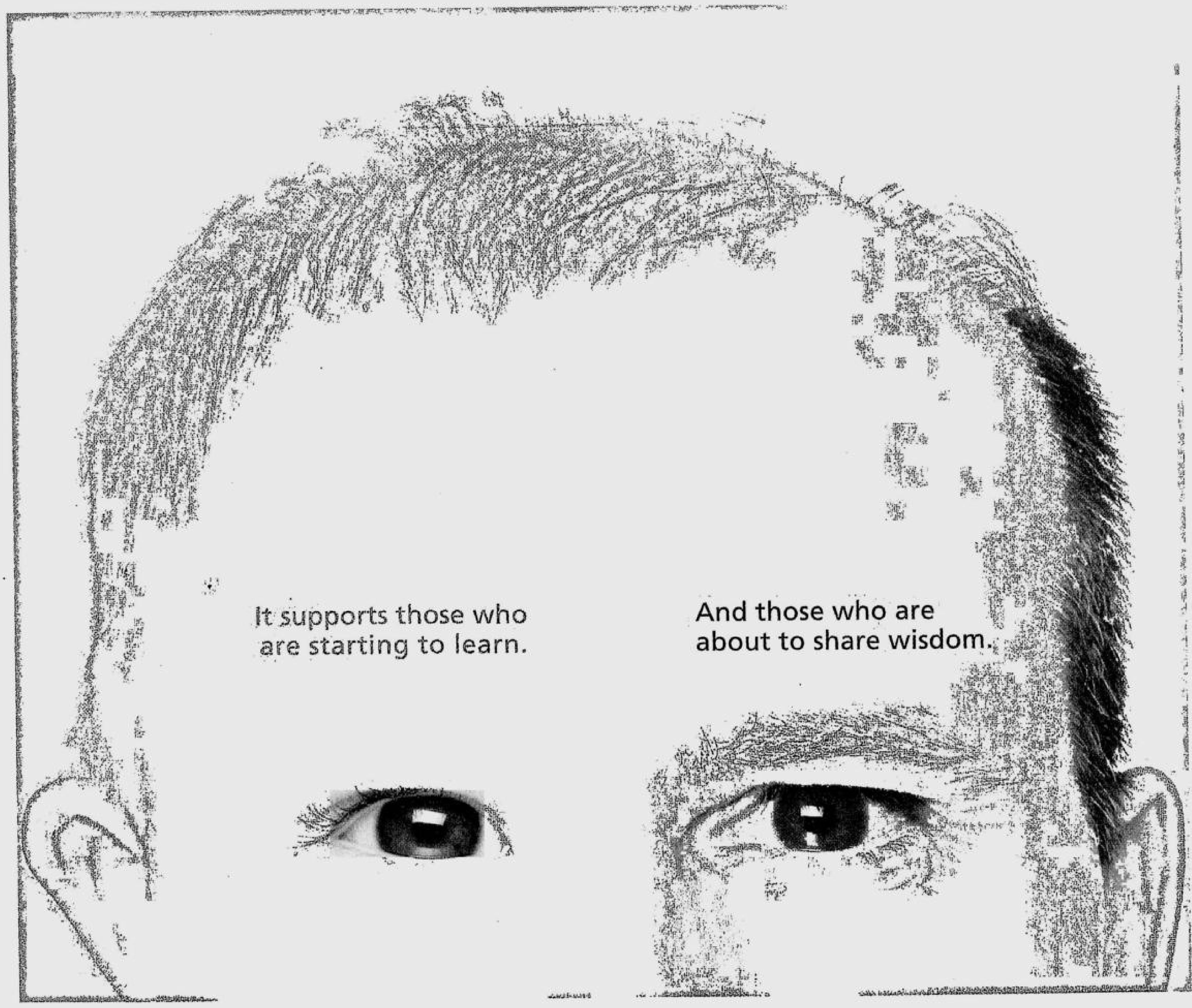
Wolfe wrote the groundbreaking book "The Sunfood Diet Success System," which has already reached more than 100,000 ad-

NATURAL/ D3

Cool your nerves!
Take a Hot Shower.
ARIVA
WATER HEATERS
Call now to get
Free Installation!
724-59-07
723-00-32
Distributed by: JETT
THE WATER HEATER COMPANY
www.jett-heater.com
Built-In ELCB
Electronic Control Switch
Complete Fittings



LUGGAGE
Summer Getaway
DELSEY
SM DEPARTMENT STORE We've got it all for you!
MAKATI ORTIGAS MANILA



It supports those who
are starting to learn.

And those who are
about to share wisdom.

Finally, an insurance that presents you with the widest range of options on the way you invest and how you use the returns. The PruLink Assurance Account.

There are a multitude of reasons why you invest, whether it's for a child's education or for a retirement plan. This is why PruLink's investment choices are as varied, from fixed income securities to equities. And you still enjoy peace of mind with death and disability benefits. Possibly, it's the most intelligent way to plan for the future.

PRULINK ASSURANCE ACCOUNT We're here to listen. PRULIFE UK

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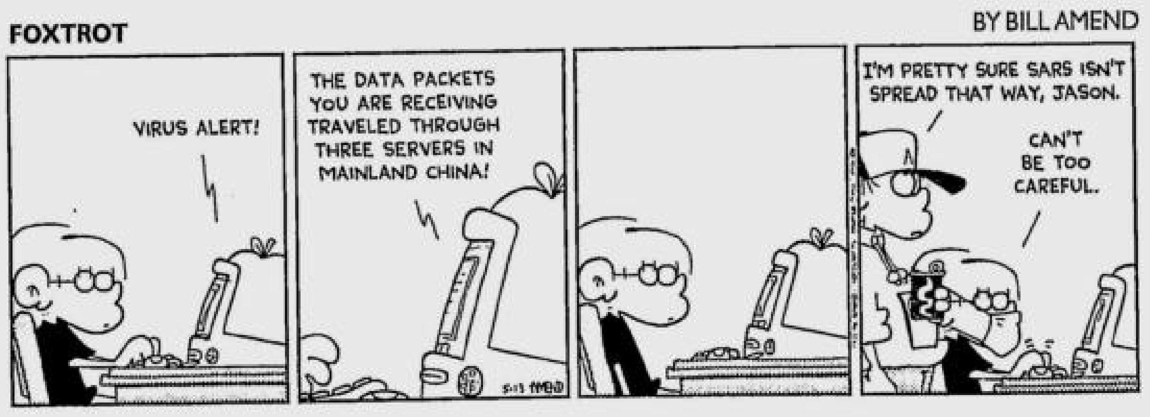
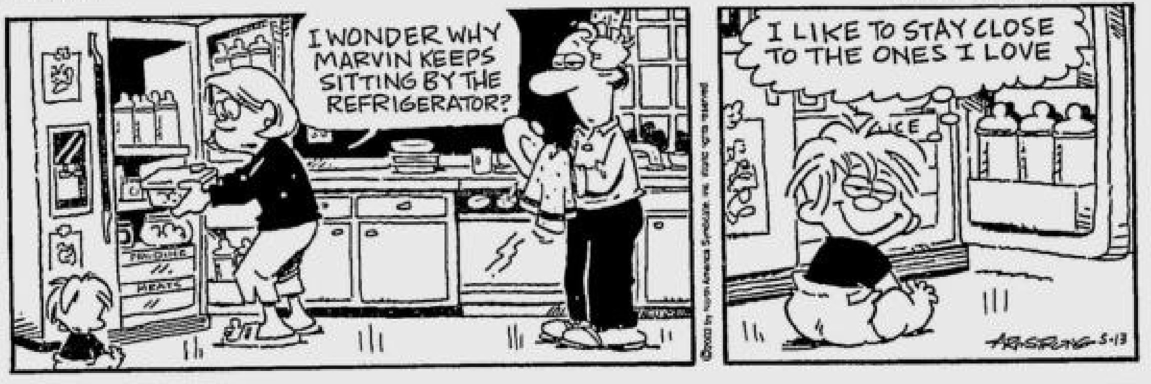
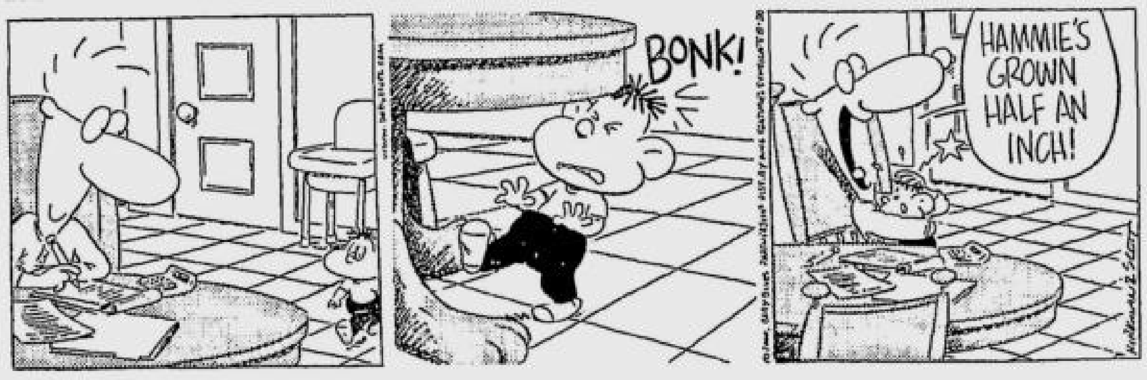
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


VIRUS ALERT!
THE DATA PACKETS YOU ARE RECEIVING TRAVELED THROUGH THREE SERVERS IN MAINLAND CHINA!
I'M PRETTY SURE SARS ISN'T SPREAD THAT WAY, JASON.
CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL.

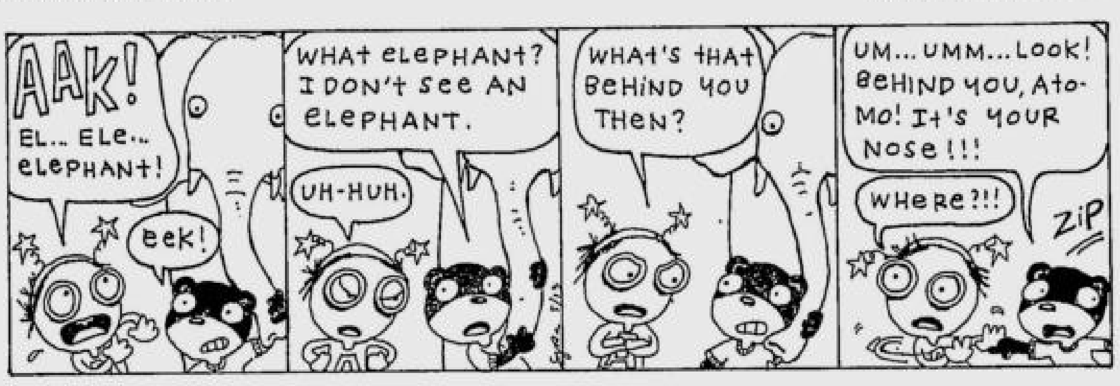
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I WONDER WHY MARVIN KEEPS SITTING BY THE REFRIGERATOR?
I LIKE TO STAY CLOSE TO THE ONES I LOVE
ICE
MEATS

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


BONK!
HAMMIE'S GROWN HALF AN INCH!

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


AAK! EL... ELE... ELEPHANT!
EEK!
WHAT ELEPHANT? I DON'T SEE AN ELEPHANT.
UH-HUH.
WHAT'S THAT BEHIND YOU THEN?
UM... UMM... LOOK! BEHIND YOU, ATO-MO! IT'S YOUR NOSE!!!
WHERE?!!
ZIP

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are energetic and most definitely a perfectionist. Nothing is too much trouble for you. You have an advanced, scientific appreciation of things. You are always modern and up-to-date. Even though you are hard-driving personally, you often appear low-key and modest to others. The year ahead is social, fun-loving and romantic. **Birthdate of:** Cate Blanchett, actress; Robert Zemeckis, director/producer; George Lucas, director/producer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): The reality of your emotional relationships is important today. You want people to actually talk to you. You don't want their eyes to glaze over when you're speaking: You have something to say!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Contacts with governments or large organizations could somehow bring money to you today. Alternatively, these contacts could help you improve your job or get a different one.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is an excellent day to do business with friends or groups. Furthermore, friends can help you in whatever business ventures you choose to explore.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): People respect your discipline and thoroughness today. Whatever you do, you approach it with care and attention to detail. Service like this is appreciated!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Serious plans connected with travel, publishing, the media and higher education are worth your consideration now. This is not pie-in-the-sky thinking—it can be done!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day for all forms of business and commerce. The support you need from people is there. It's also an excellent time for fund-raising and getting donations from others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You find it very easy to work with others today. You are willing to respect their standards, and this willingness, in turn, earns you their respect. (A respect you deserve.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Romantic flirtations with someone older or more experienced are likely today. This might be nothing more than a lift to your ego, but such are life's simple pleasures.

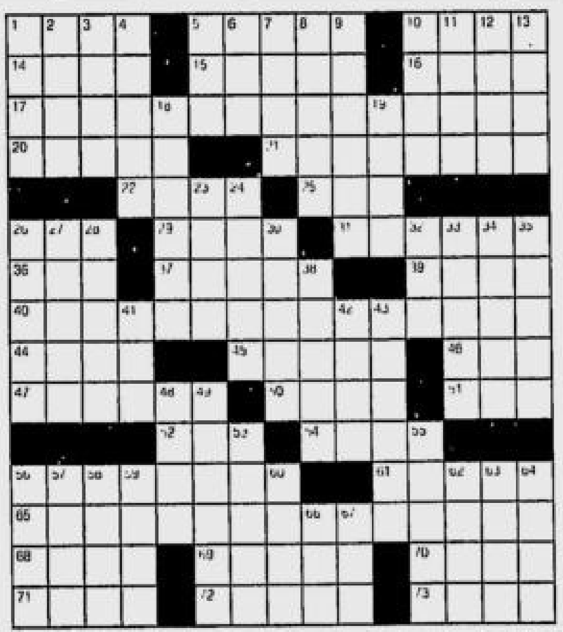
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Any creative work you do now will be excellent. You are willing to spend time on details and preparation. (As you well know, this is the part that always makes a difference.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Make plans to beautify your home or make it more attractive in some way. Whatever you do will give you long-term pleasing results. (And it will please others as well.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): People respect what you have to say today because you sound like you know what you're talking about. This is because you're willing to give attention to detail.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Advice from older people could help you enormously today. Their counsel might improve your earning ability. Always consider advice, no matter what the source.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Mark Moldowsky
Huntington, NY
5/13/03

ACROSS
1 Mil. infraction
5 Actress Delta
10 Knife thrust
14 Zero in tennis
15 Man from Manila
16 Part of a day
17 Fifth Amendment concern
20 Passover meal
21 Chemical suspension
22 Italian volcano
25 Span of time
26 Used a chair
29 Employ
31 Injured
36 "Much __ About Nothing"
37 Solidarity
39 Inter
40 Long-running soap
44 Mimic
45 Smooth transition
46 NASA's ISS partner
47 Flow
50 Out on a _
51 Lair
52 Cloud up
54 Boo-hoos
56 Flowed from
61 Zodiac scales
65 World Series side
68 Persia, now
69 Legally bar
70 Grooving on
71 Instrument for Orpheus
72 "The Winding Stair" poet
73 Highland loch

DOWN
1 Matterhorn range
2 Had on
3 Roman poet
4 Earthen dike
5 Nocturnal flyer
6 Avail oneself of
7 Ready for picking
8 Lennon's "Instant __"
9 Satiating amount
10 Spike Lee's "__ Gotta Have It"
11 Singer Amos
12 Mobile lead-in
13 __ Mawr
18 Camelot king
19 Self-defense, e.g.
23 Songstress Simone
24 Seed coverings
26 Heroic tales
27 Highly skilled
28 Skin cream
30 Mrs. Mertz
32 DH's stat
33 Toned down
34 Wipe out
35 Poet Thomas
38 Bear and Berra
41 Before, briefly
42 Japanese wrestling
43 Small stone
48 A long way off
49 Rock group, _ Crue
53 Silly skein
55 Nonviolent protest
56 First Oscar-winner Jannings
57 Contrary gardener of verse
58 Slightly open
59 Nary a one
60 Computer info
62 Nota __ (note well)
63 Charlie Brown's expletive
64 Cookie guy
66 "I __ Rhythm"
67 FedEx rival

Monday's Puzzle Solved

L	A	N	C	E	■	C	O	P	E	■	S	T	A	R
I	D	I	O	M	■	A	M	E	S	■	P	A	C	A
M	A	S	Q	U	E	R	A	D	E	P	A	R	T	Y
A	M	I	■	■	N	E	R	D	■	E	R	O	S	E
■	■	■	P	E	T	E	■	L	I	N	T	■	■	■
F	A	K	E	F	I	N	G	E	R	N	A	I	L	S
O	M	E	R	T	A	■	R	R	S	■	■	R	E	T
L	I	A	M	S	■	D	I	S	■	B	R	A	V	E
I	N	N	■	■	H	O	E	■	G	U	I	N	E	A
C	O	U	N	T	E	R	F	E	I	T	B	I	L	L
■	■	■	A	H	E	M	■	C	A	T	S	■	■	■
U	L	E	M	A	■	O	M	E	N	■	■	A	S	S
S	U	G	A	R	S	U	B	S	T	I	T	U	T	E
S	L	O	T	■	E	S	A	I	■	V	A	D	E	R
R	U	S	H	■	T	E	S	S	■	O	P	I	N	E

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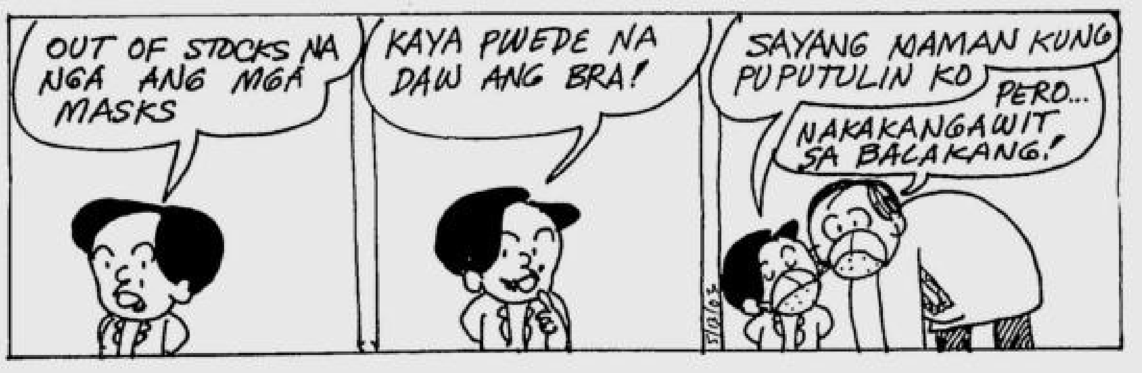
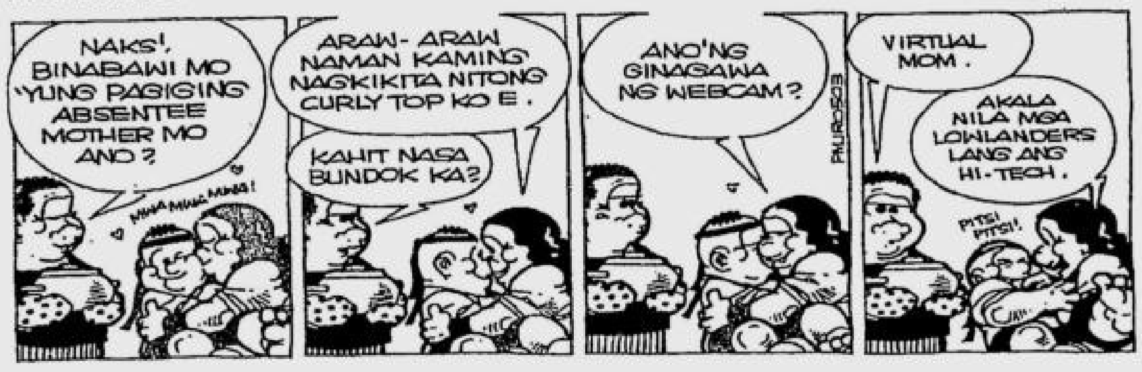
5/13/03

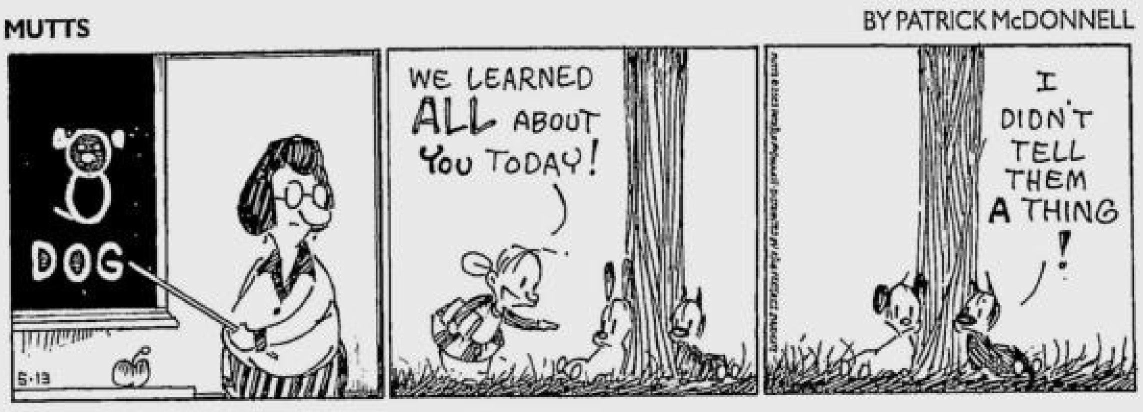
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


OUT OF STOCKS NA NGA ANG MGA MASKS
KAYA PWEDE NA DAW ANG BRA!
SAYANG NAMAN KUNG PUPUTULIN KO
PERO... NAKAKANGAWIT SA BALAKANG!

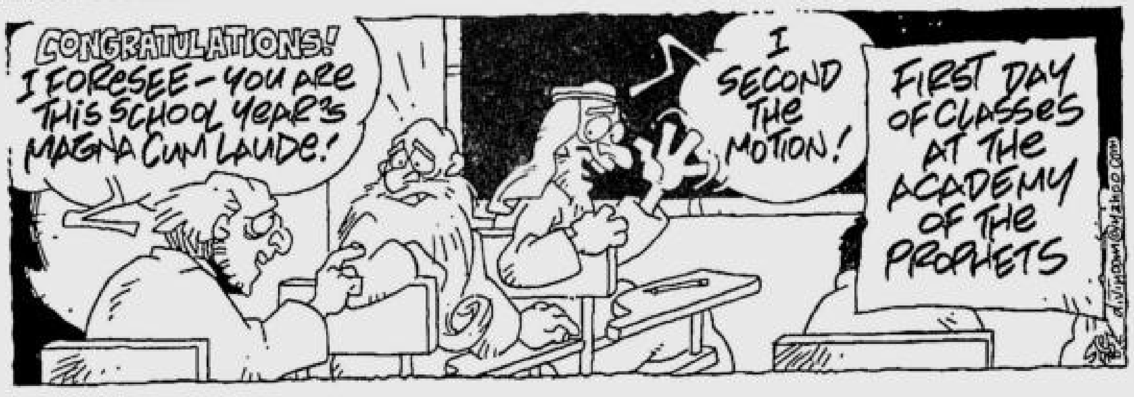
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAKS! BINABAWI MO 'YUNG PAGIGING ABSENTEE MOTHER MO ANO?
MWA MWA MWA!
ARAW-ARAW NAMAN KAMING NAGKIKITA NITONG CURLY TOP KO E.
KAHIT NASA BUNDOK KA?
ANO'NG GINAGAWA NG WEBCAM?
VIRTUAL MOM.
AKALA NILA MGA LOWLANDERS LANG ANG HI-TECH.
PITS! PITS!

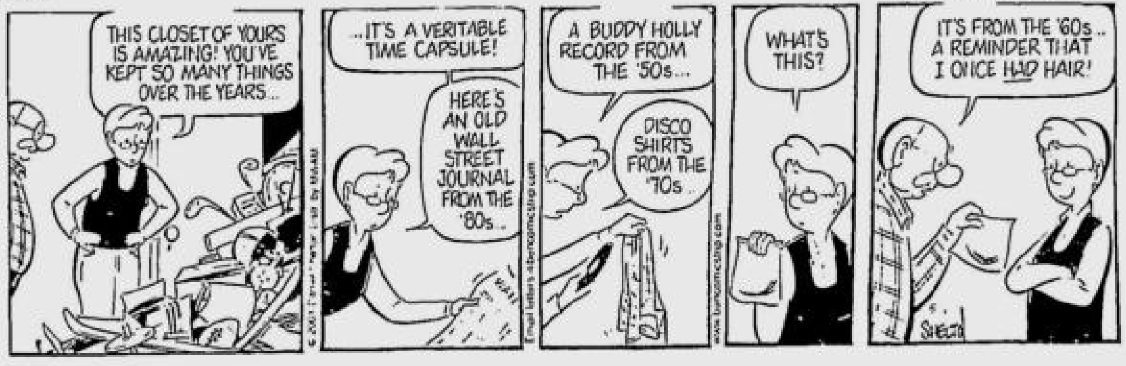
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


DOG
WE LEARNED ALL ABOUT YOU TODAY!
I DIDN'T TELL THEM A THING!

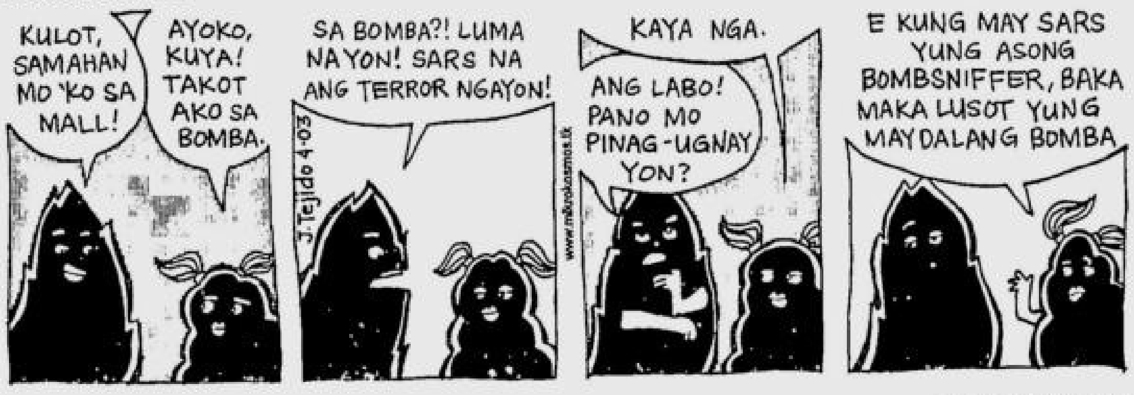
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


CONGRATULATIONS! I FORESEE - YOU ARE THIS SCHOOL YEAR'S MAGNA CUM LAUDE!
I SECOND THE MOTION!
FIRST DAY OF CLASSES AT THE ACADEMY OF THE PROPHETS

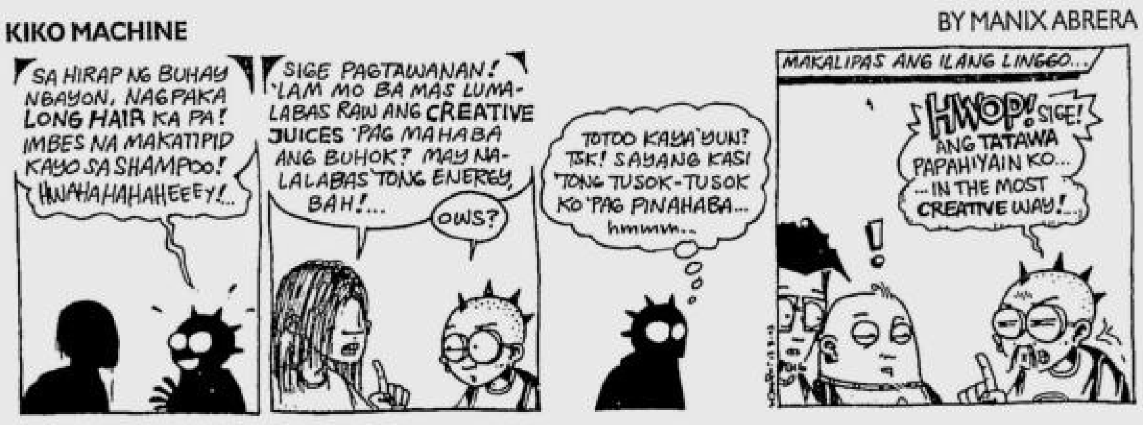
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


THIS CLOSET OF YOURS IS AMAZING! YOU'VE KEPT SO MANY THINGS OVER THE YEARS...
...IT'S A VERITABLE TIME CAPSULE!
HERE'S AN OLD WALL STREET JOURNAL FROM THE '80s...
A BUDDY HOLLY RECORD FROM THE '50s...
DISCO SHIRTS FROM THE '70s...
WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S FROM THE '60s... A REMINDER THAT I ONCE HAD HAIR!

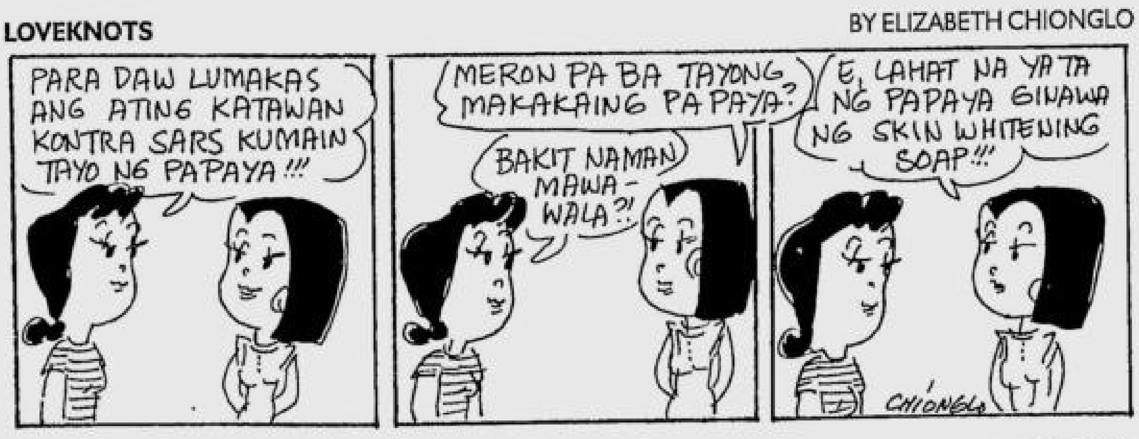
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KULOT, SAMAHAN MO 'KO SA MALL!
AYOKO, KUYA! TAKOT AKO SA BOMBA.
SA BOMBA?! LUMA NA YON! SARS NA ANG TERROR NGAYON!
KAYA NGA.
ANG LABO! PANO MO PINAG-UGNAY YON?
E KUNG MAY SARS YUNG ASONG BOMBSNIFFER, BAKA MAKA LUSOT YUNG MAY DALANG BOMBA

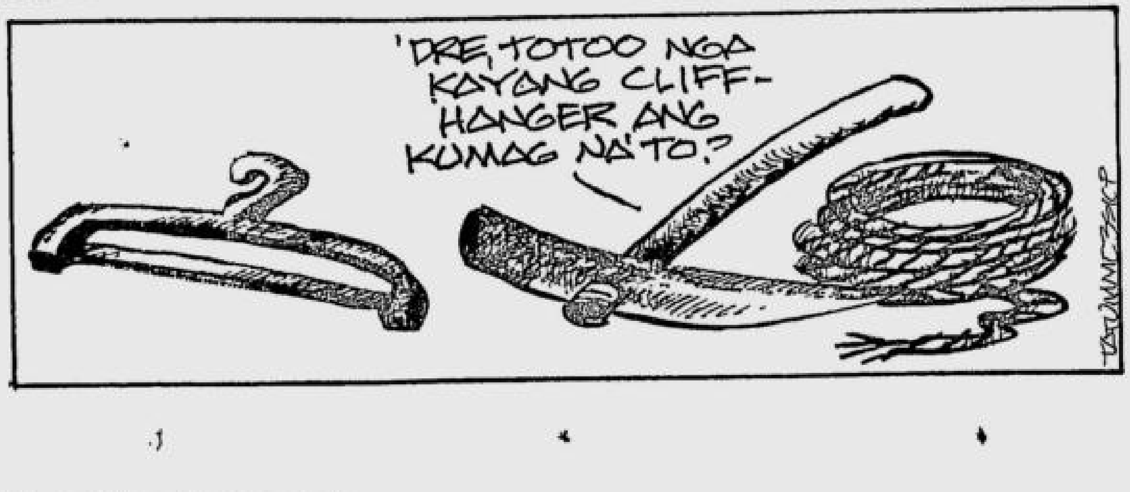
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


SA HIRAP NG BUHAY NGAYON, NAGPAKA LONG HAIR KA PA! IMBES NA MAKATIPID KAYO SA SHAMPOO! HWAHAHAHAHEEEY!...
SIGE PAGTAWANAN! 'LAM MO BA MAS LUMALABAS RAW ANG CREATIVE JUICES 'PAG MAHABA ANG BUHOK? MAY NALALABAS 'TONG ENERGY, BAH!...
OWS?
TOTOO KAYA 'YUN? TSK! SAYANG KASI 'TONG TUSOK-TUSOK KO 'PAG PINAHABA... hmmm...
MAKALIPAS ANG ILANG LINGGO...
HWOP! SIGE! ANG TATAWA PAPAHIYAIN KO... ...IN THE MOST CREATIVE WAY!...

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PARA DAW LUMAKAS ANG ATING KATAWAN KONTRA SARS KUMAIN TAYO NG PAPAYA!!!
MERON PA BA TAYONG MAKAKAING PAPAYA?
BAKIT NAMAN MAWAWALA?!
E, LAHAT NA YATA NG PAPAYA GINAWA NG SKIN WHITENING SOAP!!!

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


'DRE, TOTOO NGA KAYANG CLIFF-HANGER ANG KUMAG NA'TO?

From page D1

herents. He brings his advocacy of living food nutrition from San Diego, California, in what he considers the fattest nation on earth, to San Benito, Batangas, in a country where feasts are incomplete without the fat-laden *lechon* roasted to a crisp and food grown in chemical-filled rice fields.

Wolfe says we violate nature's law by eating food that is processed, cured, embalmed, chemicalized, radiated, genetically modified and devitalized. This results in an imbalance called disease.

At the same time, the processed food industry has spawned an ecological disaster. Grain farming has de-mineralized the fertile earth. Landfills are polluted with unbio-degradable trash. Smog from fuel emissions exceed allowable limits. Tap water contains chemicals and excessive levels of lead.

The environment is getting more and more toxic because of neglect and abuse. It is time to prepare against an imminent biological threat.

Bio-ecoterrorism lurks close to home, under our skin. We should protect our health through good hygiene and natural nutrition.

Wolfe, the son of medical doctors and has degrees in environmental engineering, political science and law, has become a guru of a natural revolution sweeping the world.

From Woody Harrelson to Roxanne Klein of the first fine-dining, raw-food restaurant in America, exponents of the raw food movement proclaim: "Life change comes from the inside out."

In a country where there is no comprehensive food-safety policy system to protect 80 million people, each of us will have to take responsibility for what we eat. We cannot rely on the processed-food industry or local sanitation officer, not even the doctor, to guarantee the safety of our food.

Natural nutrition tells us that we should get our food at source and eliminate the circuitous route of farming the grains to feed the animals that are processed to feed humans. When people tamper with nature, microorganisms jump species and mutate into diseases deadly to humans.

Doctors will tell you that the country's top killer diseases—heart ailments, cancer and severe infections—can be traced to bad nutrition. People apparently die not from lack of food but from eating too much of the wrong food.

Conventional medicine may have managed to save lives but alternative medicine considers natural nutrition integral to the maintenance and restoration of health in these toxic times.

Adherents attest that no other medical approach can effortlessly eliminate unwanted pounds, boost the immune system, bring body and mind closer to the spirit, boost creative thought, clear emotional blockages, create a healthier life for the human being in harmony with the rest of humanity and the environment.

The essential oil

Wolfe identifies three basic food challenges in the tropics: cooking oil, water and oxygen.

He recommends that only coconut oil should be used for cooking since it is the most stable of any known oil at high temperature of up to 170°F (67°C).

A completely saturated fat, it does not form dangerous trans-fatty acids and is the only oil—aside from its cousin, palm kernel oil—that does not turn rancid at high temperature. Any other oil, when cooked at high temperature, can be toxic to the body.

But the core of the living food nutrition is the idea that to get the optimum benefit, food must be eaten raw in its natural state. Cooking at high temperature kills food enzymes, essential life-giving elements needed for digestion and assimilation of nutrients.

A recent study confirms that cooking creates new compounds detrimental to health. Inflammatory chemicals that form quickly at high temperature are linked to heart and kidney diseases and diabetes.

On the other hand, fatty acids in raw virgin oils combine with minerals, vitamins and complex biological compounds as antioxidants in the body to prevent and reverse damage by giving free radicals, highly active and damaging atoms and chemical groups, the electrons they need to become stable.

Durian for a book

Anything worth having is worth working for. In exchange for out-of-season durian fruits from San Andres Market, the INQUIRER obtained Wolfe's latest book, "Eating for Beauty," containing a cornucopia of information about tropical fruits.

Wolfe would not leave without tasting the strong-smelling Philippine durian, which has one of the highest concentrations of protein among fruits, making it an excellent muscle-builder. It is also a strong blood-cleanser.

The nutrition guru also wants to see for himself the durian's legendary powers not only as an aphrodisiac but as a natural high-energy giving food.

Organic sun-cooked fruits with seeds are highly mineralized and relatively low in sugar. They make up the energy-propelling carbohydrates in his Sunfood Triangle of chlorophyll, fats and sugar.

Drinking water

Most tap water is loaded with heavy metals, chlorine, fluoride and microorganisms. Many water systems are polluted and unfit to drink or swim in. Wolfe says that aside from natural spring water, nothing else is safe to consume.

If the local water system is unreliable, he says the best household method to rid drinking water of bacteria and amoeba contamination was to put two drops of hydrogen peroxide (agua oxigenada of 30 percent solution) into one liter.

To allow drinking water to efficiently carry nutrients to every cell and flush every toxin out of our body, Wolfe suggests "charging" it. "Charging" makes water more polar and strongly electrical as the hydrogen molecules become closer together.

This can be done in four ways: by adding a few pinches of sundried mineral sea salt, by squeezing lemon/*calamansi* juice, by placing plant (*pandan*/mint) leaves in it, or putting it under direct sunshine.

Good hydration increases the strength of our immune system. Natural water has its own flushing abilities not found in fruit and vegetable juices. Wolfe confirms that, ideally, we should drink when our stomach is empty. Water dilutes the digestive fluids, leading to poor food absorption and constipation.

Food for longevity

A do-as-I-do lecturer, Wolfe reveals his formula for longevity: 50 percent diet, 20 percent exercise, 20 percent mental activity, 10 percent spiritual development.

He stresses the importance of oxygen for longevity. Oxygen is food. Lack of oxygen is linked to every existing disease so it is believed oxygen can add 20-40 years to our life.

Wolfe, who is also an environmentalist, says human cells require oxygen to live. He cites a study of cell development that found "animals were healthier in the past when the earth used to have about 30 percent oxygen." The earth's oxygen is estimated to be down to 21 percent, although cities have as low as eight percent.

People in cities or where there is excessive pollution can cope with the lack of oxygen by getting an air purifier for the home, which not only minimizes microbial transmissions but also generates negative ions that promote a better mindset and health.

Proper oxygenation generates positive emotions. Thus, Wolfe describes stress "as a constriction or choking of oxygen." In other words, the longer we take our breaths, the longer we live. Slow and easy breathing slows down the metabolism so that our energy is not wasted on excessive digestion or immune-system response.

Nutrition as medicine

Wolfe sees the steady progress of the living food lifestyle. "We're just at the beginning. There is so much potential to be fulfilled, especially in America where we have the chance to turn around the standard American diet (SAD) into a better, healthier lifestyle."

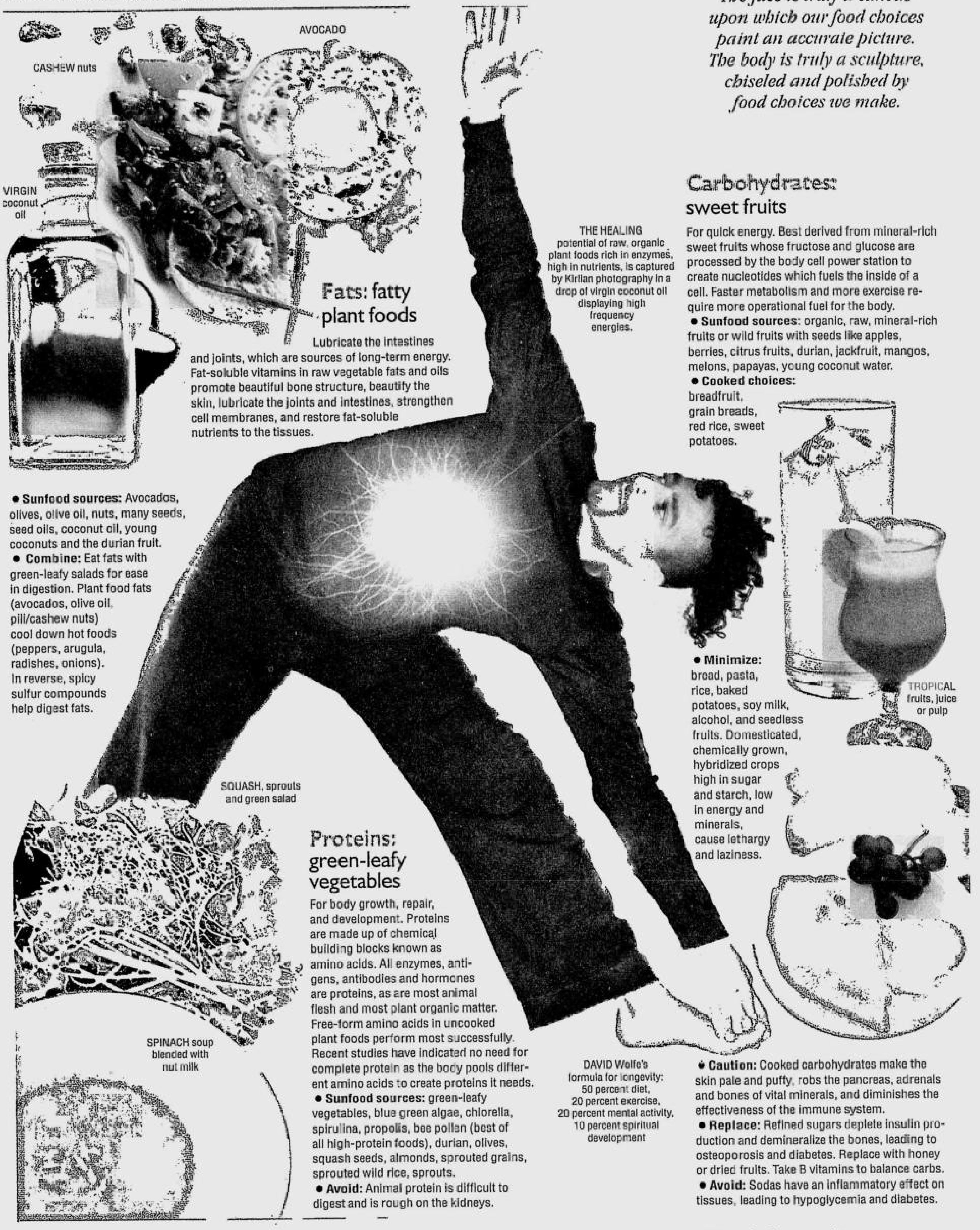
In the Philippines, looking at the tropical setting of The Farm at San Benito, the Sunfood Diet guru tells his audience, "The future is here."

The Sunfood path to wellness

Natural nutrition guru David Wolfe prescribes a new food paradigm as a health fix in these toxic times: organic, highly mineralized, suncooked and raw, that is safe and ideal in a tropical sunshine country like the Philippines. Instead of a pyramid, he draws a triangle of three food classes within which to stay balanced according to one's metabolic type, current state of digestion, health history and health goals.

Food for thought and health

We are what we eat. What we eat deeply affects the way we think, feel and behave. The face is truly a canvas upon which our food choices paint an accurate picture. The body is truly a sculpture, chiseled and polished by food choices we make.


CASHEW nuts
AVOCADO
VIRGIN coconut oil
TROPICAL fruits, juice or pulp
SQUASH, sprouts and green salad
SPINACH soup blended with nut milk

THE HEALING potential of raw, organic plant foods rich in enzymes, high in nutrients, is captured by Kirlian photography in a drop of virgin coconut oil displaying high frequency energies.

DAVID Wolfe's formula for longevity: 50 percent diet, 20 percent exercise, 20 percent mental activity, 10 percent spiritual development

Fats: fatty plant foods

Lubricate the intestines and joints, which are sources of long-term energy. Fat-soluble vitamins in raw vegetable fats and oils promote beautiful bone structure, beautify the skin, lubricate the joints and intestines, strengthen cell membranes, and restore fat-soluble nutrients to the tissues.

- **Sunfood sources:** Avocados, olives, olive oil, nuts, many seeds, seed oils, coconut oil, young coconuts and the durian fruit.
- **Combine:** Eat fats with green-leafy salads for ease in digestion. Plant food fats (avocados, olive oil, pili/cashew nuts) cool down hot foods (peppers, arugula, radishes, onions). In reverse, spicy sulfur compounds help digest fats.

Carbohydrates: sweet fruits

For quick energy. Best derived from mineral-rich sweet fruits whose fructose and glucose are processed by the body cell power station to create nucleotides which fuels the inside of a cell. Faster metabolism and more exercise require more operational fuel for the body.

- **Sunfood sources:** organic, raw, mineral-rich fruits or wild fruits with seeds like apples, berries, citrus fruits, durian, jackfruit, mangos, melons, papayas, young coconut water.
- **Cooked choices:** breadfruit, grain breads, red rice, sweet potatoes.
- **Minimize:** bread, pasta, rice, baked potatoes, soy milk, alcohol, and seedless fruits. Domesticated, chemically grown, hybridized crops high in sugar and starch, low in energy and minerals, cause lethargy and laziness.
- **Caution:** Cooked carbohydrates make the skin pale and puffy, robs the pancreas, adrenals and bones of vital minerals, and diminishes the effectiveness of the immune system.
- **Replace:** Refined sugars deplete insulin production and demineralize the bones, leading to osteoporosis and diabetes. Replace with honey or dried fruits. Take B vitamins to balance carbs.
- **Avoid:** Sodas have an inflammatory effect on tissues, leading to hypoglycemia and diabetes.

Proteins: green-leafy vegetables

For body growth, repair, and development. Proteins are made up of chemical building blocks known as amino acids. All enzymes, antigens, antibodies and hormones are proteins, as are most animal flesh and most plant organic matter. Free-form amino acids in uncooked plant foods perform most successfully. Recent studies have indicated no need for complete protein as the body pools different amino acids to create proteins it needs.

- **Sunfood sources:** green-leafy vegetables, blue green algae, chlorella, spirulina, propolis, bee pollen (best of all high-protein foods), durian, olives, squash seeds, almonds, sprouted grains, sprouted wild rice, sprouts.
- **Avoid:** Animal protein is difficult to digest and is rough on the kidneys.

Oxygen to breathe

- Oxygen is food. Proper oxygenation can add 20-40 years to a lifespan.
- Proper oxygenation provides positive emotions as stress is a constriction or choking of oxygen.
- To cope with lack of oxygen in polluted areas, using an air purifier for the home can minimize conditions for microbial transmissions, and also generate negative ions for a healthy mind.
- The longer we take our breaths, the longer we live. Slow and easy breathing slows down metabolism, conserving energy that would have been wasted on excessive digestion or immune system response.

Water safe to drink

- Many of the water systems are polluted and unfit to drink. Safest water to consume is natural spring water.
- The best household method for purifying drinking water against bacteria and amoeba contamination is with 2 drops of hydrogen peroxide (agua oxigenada of 30 percent solution) into a liter.
- "Charging" drinking water to make it more polar and strongly electrical makes it function efficiently in carrying nutrients to every cell and flushing every toxin out of the body: 1) add a few pinches of sundried sea salt, 2) squeeze lemon/*calamansi* juice, 3) place plant (*pandan*/mint) leaves on it, 4) put it under direct sunshine.
- Being well-hydrated increases the strength of the immune system. Drink when the stomach is empty, otherwise water dilutes the digestive fluids, leading to poor food absorption and constipation.

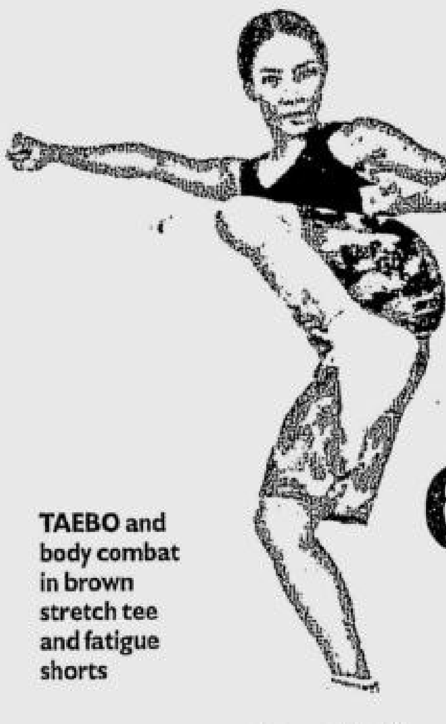
Oil safe for cooking

- Use coconut oil **only and exclusively** for cooking. A completely saturated fat, coconut oil is the most stable of any known oil at high temperatures up to 170 F (67 C) and does not turn rancid.
- Coconut oil is a petrochemical filter and an antimicrobial that can actually destroy microbes.
- Cooking at high temperature kills food enzymes, essential life-giving elements needed for digestion and assimilation of nutrients.
- Cooking at high temperature creates new compounds detrimental to health. These inflammatory chemicals are linked to cardiovascular and kidney diseases and diabetes

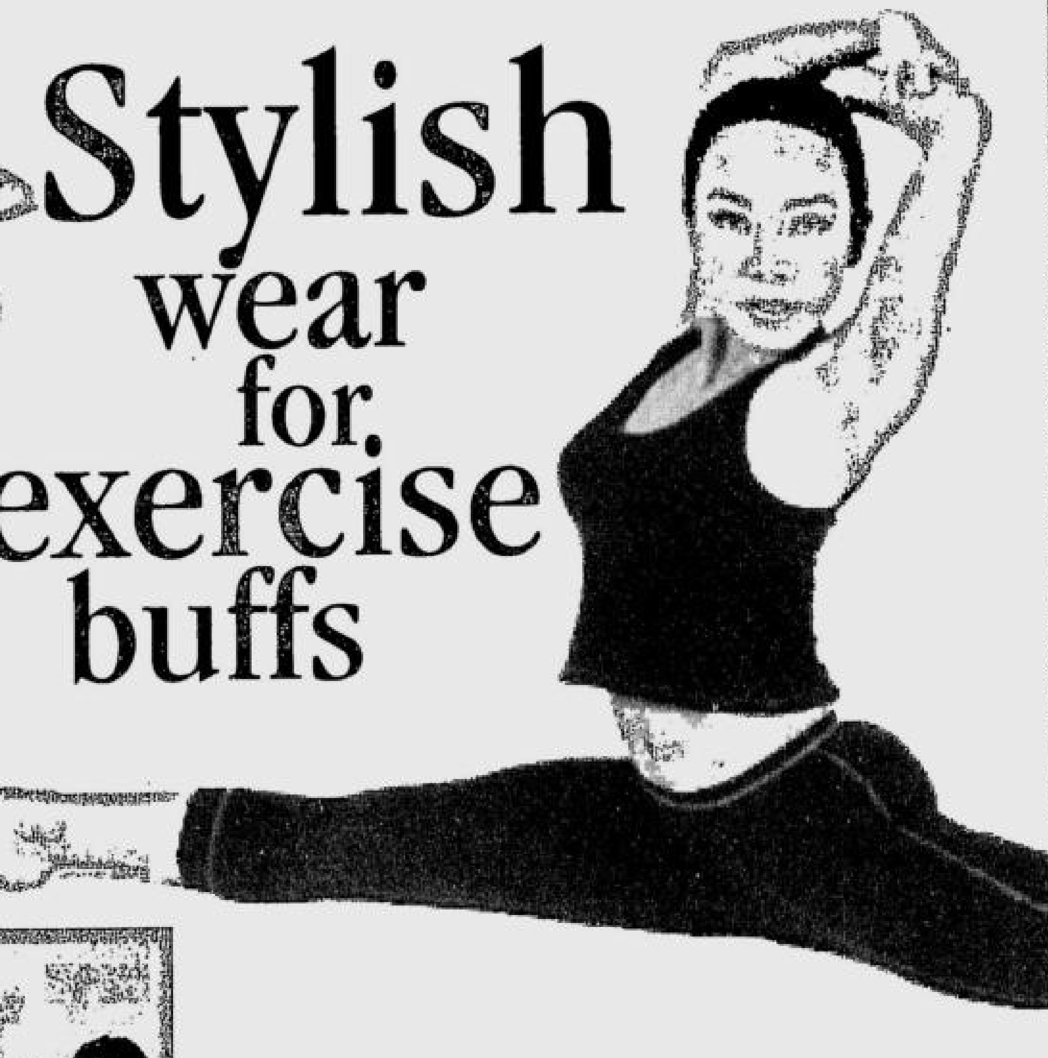
SOURCES: ● DAVID WOLFE, SUNFOOD DIET SUCCESS SYSTEM / EATING FOR BEAUTY ● CHEF KRISTIN SURRAT, THE FARM AT SAN BENITO, 85/15 GOURMET CUISINE

INQUIRER INFOGRAPHIC: LYNETT A. VILLARIBA

Stylish wear for exercise buffs



TAEBO and body combat in brown stretch tee and fatigue shorts



BROWN stretch tee and calf-length tights with stitching detail

CHEERLEADER Anna wears black stretch tee and black cycling shorts with white side stripes.

YVONNE de los Reyes with daughter Marietta Herranz and granddaughter Anna wearing Yvonne's signature Ballet exponent

STRETCH IN STYLE. Printed stretch camisole and black drawstring pants

ACTIVE wear styles have broadened to accommodate the corresponding increase in fitness options. From taebo, yoga to the nascent body combat, apparel variety has reached dizzying proportions, each especially suited to meet the demands of a particular activity.

At Greenbelt Shopping Plaza, Yvonne's flagship store displays dance and ballet wear, swimwear and exercise gear. Camisoles, bandeaux, tank tops, leotards, midriff tops, bodyquits, biggie shirts, loose drawstring pants, tights in varying lengths, shorts, ballet and jazz shoes and accessories like headbands and warmers come in a variety of colors and prints.

If one is taking up body combat (a mixture of kickboxing and taebo), one can choose a nylon bandeau to pair with drawstring loose fatigue pants made of soft material, or pair the pants (which also come in knee-length version) with a stretch midriff, tank top or biggie shirt.

"There are three types of people, dress-wise, in the gym," observes Marietta Herranz, Yvonne's general manager and daughter of founder Yvonne de los Reyes. "There are the daring, show-all types, who would think nothing of wearing a bandeau and tight shorts. There are the conservative ones who are all covered up, in loose shirts and leggings. There are the ones in between, who wear a skimpy pair of cycling shorts and a reasonably-covered top, or those who would wear a daring ensemble but would cover it up with a T-shirt which they would remove when exercising. It all depends on the person, and we try to answer every need. We have noticed, though, that when people dress for exercise, they expect to dress up with the body they want. Filipinos are still largely conservative until they achieve the body they want."

BLACK camisole with pale pink tights and wrap skirt

Quality and style

The emphasis on quality and style has been brought about by nearly four decades of service, starting in the '60s, when ballet dancer and former Ms Philippines Yvonne de los Reyes (a contemporary of such well-known dancers as Eddie Elejar, Jojie Felix-Velarde, Julie Borromeo) started making her own ballet shoes when she couldn't find ones she liked. Ballet schools soon were ordering from her, and, with the addition of leotards and tights, Yvonne's became the leading local brand for dancewear.

Yvonne's later diversified into activewear, with Pilates, yoga, and aerobics gear, and outfits for ice skating, volleyball, gymnastics, tennis and climbing. Soon, a men's line will be added to the brand.

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

I was asked to see another accredited specialist at another accredited hospital after a consultation. Is this allowed and do I still have to meet with the MEDICard coordinator of the hospital where I was referred to?

Yes, this is allowed. It is likely that you are being referred to another specialist at another hospital because there is possibly none available in where you had your consultation. You must see the MEDICard medical coordinator of the medical facility where you were referred. He in turn will make arrangements with the specialist you require.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Neurosurgery is the chosen field of specialization of **Dr. Rhoderick M. Casis**, our accredited specialist at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City. Dr. Casis finished Medicine at UERM-MMC. He took his residency training for his specialization at St. Luke's Medical Center. He is a Fellow to the Philippine College of Surgeons, the Academy of Filipino Neurosurgeons and the Asian Congress of Neurological Surgeons. For your consultation needs, you may visit Dr. Casis at Room 618 every Mondays from 10 AM to 12 noon and from 4 to 6 PM, and from Tuesdays to Fridays, 4 PM to 6 in the evening.

At the Sta. Clara De Montefalco Medical Center at Km. 20 North Diversion Rd., Meycauayan, Bulacan, members may seek the services of accredited specialist **Dr. Thanh Vu T. De Guzman**. "Doc Noel" as he has been fondly called, joined MEDICard's roster of top-notch physicians in 1999. He is a Medicine graduate of the University of Santo Tomas. He specializes in Otorhinolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, which he finished in Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center. He also took subspecialization residency training at St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, Australia for Otology and Neurotology, a subspecialty of ENT, devoted to the diseases of the ear, especially disorders of hearing and balance. Doc Noel holds clinic every Tuesdays and Saturdays from 9 AM to 1 PM.

In the area of Gen. Mariano Alvarez (GMA), Cavite, members may seek the services of accredited dentist **Dr. Calixto Constantino G. Nalda**. Dr. Nalda or "Doc Alex" for short, started the practice of his profession in 1993 and has been a part of MEDICard's medical service team since 1996. He finished Dentistry at the Centro Escolar University. He specializes in Oral and Maxilofacial Surgery, which he took at the St. Jude Memorial Hospital. Members may visit him for their needed dental consultations at the Nalda Dental Clinic located at Governor's Drive cor. Congressional Road, GMA, Cavite from Mondays to Saturdays, 9 AM to 7 in the evening.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 818-2161. For group or corporate membership, dial 812-8360, 817-5136 or 817-4985 and look for a membership consultant. For Cebu Sales Office call (032) 253-5031; For Davao Sales Office call (082) 224-6931/305-3386.

TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first and only HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asian region to be ISO 9002 certified.

ISO 9002

WOMEN'S Taconic (P3,695)

Sporty and comfy

ROCKPORT presents its newest casual collection for women.

Cape May and Pelham Bay sport sandals offer a convenient slip-on design cushioned with a lightweight Eva midsole and a comfortable contoured footbed.

Taconic, a sport casual shoe, showcases a sneaker-style upper and a walking platform construction for rearfoot stability, forefoot flexibility, and long-term comfort. Taconic has received the American Podiatric Medical Association Seal of Acceptance for allowing normal foot function and promoting quality foot health.

Rockport designs, produces and distributes specially engineered comfort footwear for men and women worldwide, as well as apparel and accessories.

Visit the Rockport store in Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Place Ermita, The Podium, Festival Mall, SM City Manila, SM Bicutan, SM North Edsa, SM Southmall.

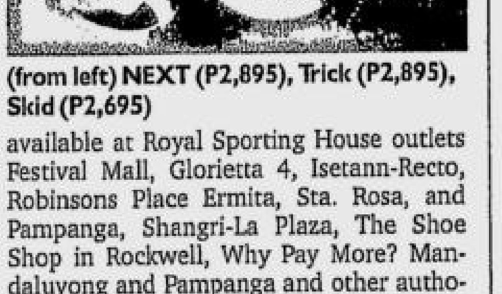
Sneakers for men with active lifestyles

NAUTICA is a complete lifestyle brand. Fragrances, watches and luggage carry the clothing company's name. Now it is selling a line of athletic shoes that has invaded the Philippines.

David Chu, founder and chief designer, started Nautica in 1983 when he decided to design colorful but tough and functional men's outerwear.

The Nautica design concept is about refining a design idea, evolving the product as customer's needs change.

The idea of Nautica is more about associations. What do you associate with the sea, with being on a boat? Functionality, technicality, quality, blue, performance, classic design.



(from left) NEXT (P2,895), Trick (P2,895), Skid (P2,695)

Nautica sandals and sports shoes are available at Royal Sporting House outlets Festival Mall, Glorietta 4, Isetann-Recto, Robinsons Place Ermita, Sta. Rosa, and Pampanga, Shangri-La Plaza, The Shoe Shop in Rockwell, Why Pay More? Mandaluyong and Pampanga and other authorized dealers.